

Democracy: sickness and cure

Why liberal democracies often under-provide public goods and
how public deliberation may correct this

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Contents

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
1. Introduction	1
 Part 1: Diagnosing dysfunction	
2. Democratic dysfunction from fundamental structure	23
3. Susceptibility to dysfunction: Types of democracy	85
4. Susceptibility to dysfunction: Types of issue and three examples	94
5. A detailed example of dysfunction: Escalation of wants for scarce natural capital	114
 Part 2: Prescribing a remedy	
6. The People's Forum: A deliberative aid for liberal democracies	145
7. Design elements of the People's Forum	204
8. Supporting devices, performance indicators and trialling the People's Forum	251
9. Discussion and conclusions	270
References	278

Abstract

The aim of the research undertaken here was to devise a new form of democratic government that, according to theoretical criteria, is likely to perform better than existing and currently proposed types of liberal democratic government. The task is commenced by inspecting structural elements common to these governments for liability to cause defective performance. A 'forward mapping' of causal chains was made from these elements and this indicated three types of behaviour will be produced that would cause some neglect of public goods. These behaviours are: confusion about who directs the development of public policy; excessive competition between political representatives; and excessive compromising of the political influence of informed public opinion by uninformed public opinion. This 'triple dysfunction' hypothesis is tested with two 'backward mapping' exercises that start from cases of under-provision of public goods to look for causal factors in government behaviours or structures. These cases largely concern the management of natural resources and as those tests give some support for the hypothesis, more tests are carried out by inspecting whether it appears to explain democratic failure in another four issues that affect the use of natural resources: population size, global warming, unemployment and growth of wants for scarce natural capital. The hypothesis is also supported by these tests and in the case of growth of wants this support is given by a fairly detailed analysis of how the growth is driven by the irresponsibility predicted by triple dysfunction.

As this hypothesis shows some reliability it is then used to design an institution for improving democratic government. This is the 'People's Forum'. It is intended to counter triple dysfunction by assisting citizens to develop strategic public policy and to pressure politicians to enact this. The Forum is compared with three other proposals for reforming democratic government that have been put forward in the literature. This comparison employs an analytical framework devised for the purpose and it indicates that in practice, the Forum is likely to outperform these

other designs. That conclusion may be systematically questioned by using the framework: by entering into it, revised ratings of the various capabilities of each design; by revising the framework itself; or by or by doing both together.

Performance indicators are suggested for monitoring the progress of any trials that are made of the Forum. An argument is made as to why any trial of the Forum needs to be carried out over a whole polity and not as small scale experiments. It is suggested that some democratic innovations of narrow focus could assist the Forum while it also assists them.

This study offers four contributions to political science: a hypothesis of failure by liberal democratic government; an institution to correct this failure; a framework for comparing such reforms; and a method for designing institutional innovations. The study also contributes to ecological economics by explaining that liberal democracies are likely to chronically over allocate natural capital from the ecological system to the economic subsystem.

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Many of the ideas presented here evolved during several decades of activism, discussion and writing. If any of them prove useful then thanks are due to the encouragement, criticism and contributions of more people than I can recall. The opportunity to undertake more thorough research and put it together was provided by an invitation to do a PhD, which was made by the Professor of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania, Jamie Kirkpatrick. To me at least, his offer has been extremely helpful.

My father Eddie Smith, who was an innovative high school principal, may have started me off in this direction more than half a century ago, for he took me fishing and thereby helped me develop an appreciation of that all-encompassing public good, the natural environment. A few years later he got me thinking with the suggestion that, for a developed society such as Australia, economic growth was no longer worth the trouble it caused. It now seems to me that this opinion reflected a good education in how to enjoy the natural environment: he was raised on a farm, learned how to catch trout in a nearby creek and studied science at university. To such experiences he added a political perspective from his father: “the majority is always wrong”.

These influences led to another: that of Tasmania’s wilderness. To get to know its beauty and its challenge and then see this being progressively dismembered is a harrowing experience – but it made me think. For twenty-five years I was in a good place to do this, for I worked as a planner and district administrator in the Forestry Commission, now Forestry Tasmania, a government agency that was, and remains, a major force in the destruction of wilderness and other natural values. This acknowledgement of the contribution of wild places to the work presented here is made very seriously. It seems to me that such emotional links drive thinking that may not otherwise occur. The absence of such stimulation may allow blindness that

is crucial, an ignorance of purposes for living. There is, of course, a trap to be avoided: such drives must not be permitted to bias observations and interpretations.

For useful discussions on malfunctions in democratic government I thank my critical but very helpful brother, Marcus Smith; also rock climber, bush walker and ardent critic of western politics and capitalism, Jack Lomax; and specialist in ecosystem services, Shane Olsen. I received much help in developing the 'scarcity multiplier' concept from ideas, criticism and encouragement given by Chris Harries, Geoffrey Lea, Pete Hay, Michael Lockwood, Graeme Wells and three anonymous reviewers for the journal *Ecological Economics*. The initial idea for my proposal for improving democratic government, the 'People's Forum', came from a discussion with Bob Brown in the late 1980s, eight years before he became the first senator for the Australian Greens. We were concerned about the lack of responsiveness of democratic governments to what appeared to us to be important, even fundamental issues. Bob thought improvement might be effected by using referendums, perhaps the citizen-initiated type being used in California. The responsibility for what this suggestion morphed into is entirely mine. The result has been sharpened over the years that followed by communication with many concerned people. To acknowledge just a few I thank Ted Becker, Professor of Political Science at Auburn University, Alabama; Peter Singer, Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University; Hugh Mackay, Australian psychologist and social researcher; and Michele Levine, Chief Executive Officer of Roy Morgan Research in Melbourne. For the final draft of this thesis I owe much to the work of two anonymous examiners of the previous version. Their perspectives on that manuscript and their technical advice have helped enormously. I also owe a great deal to the critical thinking, encouragement, humour and perhaps most of all, the patience, of two supervisors at the School of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Tasmania. Pete Hay helped to get me started and Aidan Davison followed through with very useful criticisms and suggestions.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The problem addressed in this thesis is to devise a new form of government for provincial, national and possibly multinational applications that is likely to perform better than existing or currently envisaged forms of liberal democratic government. This requires a theory for the comparative evaluation of different forms or designs of government to see whether one design is 'likely to perform better' than others. A 'new form of government' could be an existing form with one or more new institutions added to it, or an existing form with one or more institutions eliminated from it, or a combination of these, or a fundamentally new form of government. An empirical comparison of the performance of several forms of government, including at least one that has not yet been implemented, would obviously have much to contribute to the resolution of the problem addressed by this thesis, but is well beyond the scope of a doctoral research project.

Part 1 reports on an inspection of existing types of provincial and national liberal democratic government for dysfunction. The goal of this inspection was to see whether better performance is, in principle, possible and what changes might have to be made to achieve this. The inspection starts from the basic structure of existing liberal democracies to see if generic structural elements are implicated in dysfunction. It is concluded that generic structural elements cause three behaviours in political agents or principals that should make liberal democratic government fail to some degree. There are of course, many predictions and explanations of such malfunction that precede this 'triple dysfunction' hypothesis, such as the free rider, collective action and agent-principal problems analysed by public choice scholars, changing interests of citizens and their disengagement from elections and parties, and a paucity of discourse by citizens on public policy that deliberative theorists

attempt to address. However, the 'triple dysfunction' hypothesis is offered as a fairly comprehensive but simple concept that analyses failure in terms of the effect of the structure of liberal democratic government.

The hypothesis is subjected to preliminary checks by comparing it with two other analyses that work in the opposite direction by tracing causal chains from symptoms of government failure toward their origins. More tests are made by seeing if the hypothesis appears to explain four other examples of government failure, all of which distort the management of natural resources. These examples are public policy on population size, on global warming, on unemployment and on growth of wants for limited natural capital. The last example gives an ecological economic analysis that shows in some detail that triple dysfunction is likely to allow wants for private goods to indefinitely erode the availability of natural capital, thereby progressively destroying the physical basis of quality of life. This erosion of availability is a combination of depletion of natural capital and expansion of wants to use it. A basic principle of ecological economics is that the market is not competent to macro-allocate natural capital from the ecological system for micro-allocation by the economic subsystem, so government or some other non-market mechanism must do this (Costanza and Daly 1992, 41). The examination made here, of liberal democratic management of wants, indicates that these governments are likely to fail in this role.

These preliminary checks of the triple dysfunction hypothesis indicate it has some predictive capacity and reliability, so it is used in Part 2 to guide the design of the People's Forum, a new institution to improve the performance of current forms of liberal democratic government. The Forum is designed to work for polities of state or provincial scale and larger; to be feasible to introduce in the absence of a political will for this innovation; and to improve the provision of public goods of any type, not just those considered by the preliminary checks. The potential of this design to produce good democratic government is compared with that of three other designs that have previously been put forward in political science literature as having the capacity to either improve these governments or to replace them with another democratic form thought likely to perform better. This comparison required some

refinement of existing democratic theory in order to produce an adequate evaluation framework. In conducting this research, it appeared necessary to use five distinct strategies. As this produced a design for a political institution, these strategies together with the way they were employed is articulated and put forward as a robust method for the design of political institutions.

Background

Political scientist Eran Vigoda (2002, 530) has made the following observation of democratic government.

Constitutions, legislatures, federal and local structures, as well as electoral institutions are in slow but significant decline in many Western societies. They suffer from increasing alienation, distrust, and cynicism among citizens; they encourage passivism and raise barriers before original individual involvement in state affairs.

Many other scholars also consider that, despite “general agreement on the political benefits of liberal democracy, there is a widespread sense that its present institutions are not operating satisfactorily” (Carter and Stokes 2002, 2). British sociologist Anthony Giddens (2000, 90) has outlined the problem as follows:

Democracy is spreading around the world... yet in the mature democracies, which the rest of the world is supposed to be copying, there is widespread disillusionment with democratic processes. In most Western countries, levels of trust in politicians have dropped over the past years. Fewer people turn out to vote than used to, particularly in the US. More and more people say they are uninterested in parliamentary politics, especially among the younger generation.

Concerns about democratic government are expressed not only by scholars, but even by some politicians in liberal democracies. Former Vice President of the US, Al Gore (2007) has declared that democracy is broken and needs fixing.

Senator Bill Bradley (cited in Dalton 2004, 2) gave an alarming assessment of American democracy in his farewell speech to Congress.

Democracy is paralyzed not just because politicians are needlessly partisan, although we are. The process is broken at a deeper level, and it won't be fixed by replacing one set of elected officials with another... Citizens believe that politicians are controlled: by special interests who give them money, by parties which crush their independence, by ambition for higher office that makes them hedge their position rather than call it like they really see it, and by pollsters who convince them that only focus-group phrases can guarantee them victory... Voters distrust government so deeply and so consistently that they are not willing to accept the results of virtually any decision made by this political process.

Ex-leader of the Australian Labor Party, Mark Latham (Barns 2007) has urged young people not to become politicians. Barry Cohen (2008, 3), Federal Minister for the Environment from 1983 to 1987 in the Australian Hawke Government, has lamented "that governments never connect the dots between increasing population numbers and the 'crises' that daily beset our citizens". In looking at the 2006 UN forecast of a world population of 9.2 billion by 2050, British MP Boris Johnson (2008) exclaimed:

How the hell can we [t]witter on about tackling global warming, and reducing consumption, when we are continuing to add so relentlessly to the number of consumers? The answer is politics, and political cowardice... It is time we had a grown-up discussion about the optimum quantity of human beings in this country and on this planet.

Many scientists recognize the problems that are neglected or made worse by liberal democratic governments. For example, social epidemiologists Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett (2009, 4, 5) express concern at their neglect of inequality.

Mainstream politics no longer taps into these issues [of unsatisfied social needs] and has abandoned the attempt to provide a shared vision capable of inspiring us to create a better society. As voters, we have lost sight of any collective belief that society could be different. Instead of a better society, the only thing that almost everyone strives for is to better their own position – as individuals – within the existing society.

Economics Commissioner on the UK Sustainable Development Commission, Tim Jackson (2009, 167-68) describes liberal democracies as “conflicted states” with an “institutional schizophrenia” that compels them to promote economic growth while they struggle to protect public goods from the market. He declares that a “new vision of governance... is critical.”

In the United Kingdom, persistently poor voter turnouts at elections recently prompted the Joseph Rowntree Trusts to conduct an inquiry. This reported that membership of the three main parties in the UK in 2001 was less than 25 per cent of its 1964 level (POWERInquiry 2006, 46) and that “two separate studies found significant aggregate falls in party membership across thirteen and sixteen established democracies respectively since the 1950s” (POWERInquiry 2006, 51). Similarly, Danish political scientists Jorgen Goul Andersen and Jens Hoff (2001) found that in the Scandinavian democracies, participation has declined in conventional forms of politics, such as turnout at elections and membership of parties. However, they also found that, in an informal sense, interest in politics is not diminishing because Scandinavians are turning to single issue forms of participation and “small democracy” in the workplace. This turn from party politics to issue politics is noted by Sian Kevill (cited in Smith 2005, 96), one of the directors of the BBC-iCan website that facilitates citizen involvement on public issue campaigns in the UK. “People don’t approach politics through party allegiances any more... they approach it through an issue, and this site [BBC-iCan] makes it easier for people to connect into politics through an issue.” Kevill’s view is supported by Australian political scientist Judith Brett (2007, 12).

Party identification was once the strongest predictor of how a person would vote, for the great majority of the electorate... Partisanship was habitual and it simplified the political world... party rhetoric at election time reminded people of their traditional allegiances, activating the existing party loyalty that would deliver the vote. The electorate still contains such people, but their numbers are declining. Across the western world, partisanship is on the wane and electorates are becoming more volatile. People change their vote between elections, between state and federal, between lower and upper houses.

People identify with a party but vote for another as a protest. Or people identify not much with any party but make up their minds once the campaign is underway, based on issues and their judgements of the leaders.

In surveying democratic politics in Australia, David Yencken and Nicola Henry (2008, 17), have assessed that

Australians are generally satisfied and proud of their democracy, but... There is widespread evidence of voter cynicism about politics and politicians in Australia and elsewhere. Opinion poll after opinion poll has shown low confidence in the standing of politicians and in the confidence of Australians in political institutions... [research shows] a one-third decline of belief in the moral standards of members of parliament over the preceding two decades.

Yencken and Henry offer several possible causes of this lack of confidence: a blurring of differences between the major parties as each seeks to cater to the mainstream majority of voters; the rarity of bipartisan concern for the country, as each party declares the others incompetent; the frustrating spectacle of mudslinging by politicians; apathy and retreat by citizens worn out and wearied by a myriad of issues; and disenchantment with governments that are neither transparent nor accountable and that do not facilitate meaningful public participation.

Robert Reich, who was US Secretary of Labor in the Clinton Administration, has made a similar observation for the US. He notes that surveys show a growing sense of powerlessness. In 1964, 36 percent of Americans felt “public officials don’t care much what people like me think” (Reich 2007, 5). By 2000 that sentiment was shared by more than 60 percent. In 1964, almost two-thirds of Americans believed government was run for the benefit of all and only 29 percent said it was “run by a few big interests looking out only for themselves” (Reich 2007, 5). But by 2000, the ratio was almost reversed: only 35 percent believed government was run for the benefit of all, while more than 60 percent thought it was run by a few big interests.

Surveying the recent fortunes of democratic government, the founding co-editor of *The Journal of Democracy* Larry Diamond (2009, 20), noted that a “wave of

liberation began in 1974 in Portugal". At this time barely a quarter of the world's states were democratic in the minimal sense of choosing their politicians by regular, free and fair elections based on universal suffrage. Over the next twenty years, dictatorships were replaced by freely elected governments in southern Europe, then in Latin America, followed by East Asia.

Finally, an explosion of freedom in the early '90s... spread democracy from Moscow to Pretoria... In recent years, however, this mighty tide has receded... [starting] in 1999, with the military coup in Pakistan, an upheaval welcomed by a public weary of endemic corruption, economic mismanagement and ethnic and political violence... Many emerging democracies were experiencing similar crises.... Thanks to bad governance and popular disaffection, democracy has lost ground. Since the start of the democratic wave, 24 states have reverted to authoritarian rule. Two thirds of these reversals have occurred in the past nine years – and included some big and important states such as Russia, Venezuela, Bangladesh, Thailand... Nigeria and the Philippines (Diamond 2009, 20-21).

Diamond also notes that democratic government is facing difficulties in Bolivia, Ecuador, Turkey, South Africa and Ukraine. Although there have been some recent successes such as Indonesia, Brazil, Ghana and very tentatively, Pakistan. He concludes that around 60 democracies are insecure, that many could fail and "need deep reforms to strengthen their democratic institutions and improve governance" (Diamond 2009, 22).

Several organisations provide comparative rankings of the democratic qualities of national governments. One of the most respected of these rankings is *The Economist* Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy and it supports Diamond's claims by showing that although almost half of the world's 167 independent states and two territories (excluding 27 micro-states) can currently be considered democracies, only 30 of these are rated as "full democracies", while 50 are "flawed democracies". Of the remaining countries, 36 are assessed as "hybrid regimes" (authoritarian but with some democratic features) and 51 as "authoritarian regimes" (Economist 2008c, 2). Similarly, the ranking provided by the US-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) Freedom House found a serious reversal in the fortunes of liberal democracy

over the past decade, with 2007 being the second year in succession in which “freedom retreated” (Economist 2008b, 12). A large part of this retreat has been the rapid reversal of democratic reforms made in the aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union. *The Economist* (2008c, 12) observes that the recent experience of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States is not unique:

[there] have been major reversals before – a democratisation wave after the Second World War ended with more than 20 countries subsequently sliding back to authoritarianism. We are not yet witnessing that sort of rollback, but the threat of backsliding now outweighs the possibility of further gains.

The proliferation of evidence of democracies in difficulties is matched by a growth of theoretical predictions of problems with democratic government. Public choice scholars are prominent in having “elaborated a long list of arguments for why democracy fails to deliver ‘good’ policy” (Leeson 2006, 357). One of the founders of this research program, James Buchanan (2003, 8), has observed that in “a very real sense, public choice became a set of theories of governmental failures.” Charles Blankart and Gerrit Koester (2006) suggest that this happens much more in public choice than in mainstream political science because the scholars in each area ask different questions. Hans J. Morgenthau (cited in Blankart and Koester 2006, 189) has observed that political science “deals with the nature, the accumulation, the distribution, the exercise, and the control of power on all levels of social interaction, with special emphasis upon the power of the state”. Blankart and Koester (2006, 190) suggest this means that

political scientists ask: What are the institutions and constraints that allow the accumulation, distribution, exercise, and control of power here and now – and not under some alternative, not yet existing framework? And they focus on the coercive power of the state... [But for public choice scholars] the relevant question in constitutional analysis is not limited to what effects existing institutions have... public choice focuses on suggestions for institutional improvements based on constitutional analysis”.

In the last decade or so, comparative political scientists have implied that many democratic governments fail in some ways, for a major purpose of their comparisons is to assess which forms of democracy function best. Further recognition by political science of such failure is the development over the last three decades, of theory that democratic politics would be improved by more public participation, provided that it is deliberative. Graham Smith (2001, 72) observes that “deliberative democracy is fast establishing itself as a new orthodoxy within contemporary democratic theory.” This research not only implies that democracies malfunction, but that a major cause is a deficit of competent input by citizens. This theoretical development has been preceded and accompanied by many practical attempts by both concerned citizens and political scientists to facilitate constructive political participation by the public. Some of these attempts have been simply to increase participation and others have included or focused on the facilitation of deliberation.

In an effort to develop deliberative public input into policy, many types of forums have been devised to conduct facilitated deliberation of a specific issue for a limited time. A very large forum of this type is that of *AmericaSpeaks*, which has run one of five thousand citizens. Other designs such as Deliberative Polls, consensus conferences, citizen juries and citizens’ assemblies convene relatively small groups, in order to concentrate on effective deliberation. In the US the National Issues Forums of the Kettering Foundation invite citizens to gather in groups up to the size of a town hall meeting, to discuss issues framed by carefully written booklets. To encourage participation, on-line polling is employed by NGOs such as MoveOn, Avaaz, Getup! and the Australian political party Senator On-Line. Participatory budgeting was initiated by the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, to enable the public to be involved in deciding how to spend their taxes and it is now used in many cities in South America, Europe and elsewhere. More generally and in a very diffuse sense, public participation is facilitated by the high status accorded by the public and politicians to public opinion polls. NGOs such as Greenpeace, The Wilderness Society, Amnesty International and many business associations provide participation via lobbying services for their members and sympathizers. Since 1970 the number of lobbyists working in Washington has grown enormously, so that by

1999 there were more than 60,000, spending almost two billion dollars a year, while a “similar tide of corporate lobbying has engulfed other global capitals in recent years” (Reich 2007, 136). All of these activities, whether deliberative or participatory or both, are attempts to provoke responses from democratic governments on issues concerning public goods. Some of these attempts are intended to promote what organisers and lobbyists consider the public good and many are aimed at obtaining goods for special interests at the cost of public goods. These actions can all be considered to make democracy more participatory, shifting it a little from representative towards direct democracy. However, a problem with moving in this direction is to make sure that the opportunity to influence government is distributed equally to all citizens, so that each can have their democratic say on which public goods are provided and on how many of their private goods are to be given up in order to do this. Another problem is to make sure that this ‘democratic say’ should be informed by deliberation by citizens.

A different perspective on failure in democratic government is offered by Reich. His interpretation of the growing sense of political powerlessness in American citizens is not so much that this is a sign that democracy is failing, but that capitalism has become extremely good at what it does, so that it has now become “supercapitalism” and is therefore increasingly able to assert itself over government. He states that the “triumph of supercapitalism has led, indirectly and unwittingly, to the decline of democracy” (Reich 2007, 224). It is argued in Chapter 2 that it would be more useful to state this the other way around - that the cause of this decline is the failure of democratic government to provide public goods. To provide these goods, government usually must compete for resources with those who would use them for private goods. Democratic incompetence often allows capitalism to win this competition and thereby to grow into “supercapitalism”. This distracts the people from public goods, further exacerbating democratic incompetence.

Several decades ago, eminent economist Fred Hirsch (1977, 18) surveyed the interaction of market and politics, noting that

the market provides a full range of choice between alternative piecemeal, discrete, marginal adjustments, but no facility for selection between alternative states... By contrast, the political mechanism, through which preference between alternative states could in principle be posed, has not yet developed a satisfactory system for such decision... both the market and the political system... cannot deliver on what the public takes to be their promise.

Economists Luis Carvalho and Joao Rodrigues (2006, 344) recently observed that the “contradictions touched upon by Hirsch 30 years ago have not yet been surpassed. On the contrary they are probably operative in a new phase of capitalism... which took root in the 80s and consolidated in the 90s.”

So there are signs from many sources that, whether from government failure or external forces or both, liberal democracy malfunctions to a serious degree. Perhaps the spectacle of these difficulties encourages such authoritarian behaviour as the democratic backsliding of Russia under Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev, the repressive control exerted by the Chinese Communist Party and the restrictiveness of government in Singapore, which fails to rate as a flawed democracy and is classed as a hybrid regime by the Index of Democracy (Economist 2008c, 6). Consistent with this rating, the Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Kishore Mahbubani (2008 18, 21), gives qualified support to authoritarian government for fractious societies by emphasizing that social order contributes more to the freedom of citizens than their freedom to express themselves politically. Perhaps a challenge for liberal democracy is to reform its structure so that it provides freedom of political expression in such a way that social order is maintained or enhanced.

Many scholars focus on erosion of political support as a major problem for democracy. Russell Dalton (2004, 199-200) has described this as a “pattern of ‘dissatisfied democrats’ or ‘critical citizens’ who want to improve the democratic process, rather than one of anti-system critics of democracy.” This study does not focus on dissatisfaction of citizens but on failure of democratic governments to govern. It aims to find out whether this happens and if so how it happens, to indicate how this type of government might be made to function more effectively. This approach might also indicate to some extent why citizens are ‘dissatisfied’ with

democratic government and how to reform it to increase their confidence and engagement in it.

The method used

In 1973 two experts in design and city planning, Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber recognized serious confusion about goals in public policy. They suggested this had arisen because citizens in democracies had started “asking for a clarification of purposes” (1973, 157). This development of confusion about goals appears to describe some of the growth discussed above, of widespread frustration with democratic government. Rittel and Webber (1973, 160-1, emphasis in original) observed that

goal-finding is one of the central functions of planning... Goal-finding is turning out to be an extraordinarily obstinate task... Planning problems are inherently wicked... The *information* needed to understand the problem depends on one's idea for *solving* it... To find the problem is thus the same thing as finding the solution.

Michael Harmon and Richard Mayer (1986, 9) have endorsed this view of “wicked” problems: “the choice of a definition of such a problem, in fact, typically determines its ‘solution’”. Others have expressed a similar assessment of how to tackle any problem, whether it could be classed as “wicked” or not. For example, Albert Einstein observed that the

mere formulation of a problem is far more essential than its solution, which may be merely a matter of mathematical or experimental skills. To raise new questions, new possibilities, to regard old problems from a new angle requires creative imagination and marks real advances in science (QuoteWorld 2008).

Ian Shapiro (2005, 180) has emphasized the relevance of this approach to political science: “one central task for political theorists should be to identify, criticize, and

suggest plausible alternatives to... the specifications of problems... and to do it in ways that can spark novel and promising problem-driven research agendas.”

This perspective on how to improve the study of politics is complimented by another from Jon Bond (2007, 904-5).

The kind of revolution necessary to propel political science to the next level of development is a revolution in theory. Sir Isaac Newton’s contribution to the science of physics was not the basic research he did, but rather it was his recognition of how to put what physicists already knew together into a new overarching theory. I believe it is possible that political science has accumulated enough information about how and why politics work as they do to support such a synthesis.

These recommendations provide two of five strategies that have been used in this project to design reform of liberal democratic government to reduce its dysfunction. These strategies are now described.

Five strategies for producing an institutional design

The following strategies are all widely and routinely used in research, so they are quite unremarkable and it may seem unnecessary to list them. However, the way they are used together here constitutes a method for producing an institutional design and as such it seems useful to describe it so that others may consider its potential. Whether this method is considered effective may be influenced by whether the institutional design it produced is shown to work. This design is a democratic government that operates with a ‘People’s Forum’, as described in Part 2.

The first strategy follows Bond’s recommendation to use existing knowledge, so I have done no systematic empirical research of my own, but relied largely on the interpretations of experts in relevant programs of research. I have also used my own political experience and non-academic sources of information where these appeared to be helpful and reliable.

The second strategy is to try to identify and use only information that is necessary and sufficient for the task at hand. This strategy is especially important because the task is to solve a very broad problem - that of devising a better form of government. If the problem selected was narrowly specialized, this strategy may require less emphasis, for solutions of these problems are likely to present fewer opportunities for fruitless digression. Researchers of specialized topics usually need to look for more detail within a narrow field, whereas those who tackle broad problems may need to look for large-scale patterns or general effects. Specialization might be expected to cultivate not only skills in focusing on detail, but a preoccupation with this. Archon Fung (2007, 443) has pointed out that specialization “has become a segregation of thought that now poses a fundamental obstacle to progress in democratic theory”. David Held (1991, 4) noted that while

specialization need not always lead to the fragmentation of knowledge, this seems to have happened in the case of politics and related disciplines... we seem to know more about the parts and less about the whole; and we risk knowing very little even about the parts because their context and conditions of existence in the whole are eclipsed from view.

Specialization has produced many theoretical models of democracy, but as Graham Smith (2009, 10) observes:

No practical design [for a democratic institution] can realistically hope to meet all the rigorous demands of any particular theoretical model... While theoretical work often proceeds as if it were an exhaustive account of democratic politics, theories offer only a partial analysis of our democratic condition... we tend not to develop fully-fledged theories of democracy (whatever they would look like).

This problem provokes Mark Warren (2002b, 683) to comment that recent innovations in democratic participation have demonstrated “that reality is, once again, ahead of democratic theory”. Further discussion of this issue is given below in ‘Applying the strategies’.

In using the first and second strategies, the presentation of data from experiment and observation is minimized so that the identification of patterns is not obstructed by a narrow focus on details. Pattern recognition by experts with extensive knowledge of details is used as much as possible.

The third strategy was to follow advice on designing institutions for public administration from Erik-Hans Klijn and Joop Koppenjan (2006, 158). They advocate experimentation.

Institutional design is not a simple activity. The nature of institutional design, its process and its impact are not very well understood. Institutional design is a process of pushing and pulling with uncertain results... research into institutional design is still in its infancy.

Klijn and Koppenjan (2006, 155-156) explain that “pushing and pulling” is partly needed to accommodate the power relations between the parties affected by the institution, because how “formal decisions in institutional arenas aimed at changing network rules will work out in the games played within networks is highly uncertain.” This means that institutional “designs are by definition imperfect and should be seen rather as the start of a trajectory of institutional change than as a definitive design” (Klijn and Koppenjan 2006, 156). “Pushing” is taken here to be the design phase and “pulling” to be the testing of a design. Cycles of these phases must be repeated until a design is produced that performs well.

The fourth strategy is to do the pushing or designing of the third strategy by using the insight discussed above that much of the work of producing the solution or design may be done by defining the problem. This minimizes the repetition involved in the execution of the third strategy by making its design attempts as effective as possible. Careful definition of the problem is also required for the application of the second strategy of identifying the information that is necessary and sufficient to solve it.

The fifth strategy is to use thought experiments where these may save time and expense. This was done in this study for the “pulling” or testing of the third strategy because testing by experimental trials in the real world of politics was not possible at

this early stage of the design process. As discussed in Chapter 6/ 'Initiating and running the Forum' and Chapter 7/ 'Function 11', such trials require considerable political commitment and/or funding and these resources are beyond the scope of a doctoral study. Chapter 2, supported by the rest of Part1, defines the main problem as a confusion about who directs the polity that leaves public opinion substantially in charge but too disengaged and unaware to do a good job. This definition determines the mission of the design, the two strategies it employs to accomplish this mission and therefore the broad outline of the design. In Chapter 8 it is indicated that this design cannot execute its strategies for a small group, because it uses motivations to execute its strategies that can only arise in very large groups. However, the analysis and synthesis given here in Parts 1 and 2 are the first steps towards a large scale trial; for they describe why an institution is needed and the type that appears have some chance of being able to perform the required functions. Thought experiment - imagination - is crucial for getting to this stage, because if it can, to some extent, simulate the ability of a design to solve a problem, as well as redefine a problem to indicate a design that is both feasible to implement and might work, then negotiation of the "trajectory of institutional change" should be expedited. This is because much of the "pushing and pulling" is done conceptually before undertaking any of the expensive, time-consuming and risky, real world "pulling".

Collective action theory should facilitate the execution of the fourth strategy, the definition of the problem of collective action that is to be solved. However, as Elinor Ostrom (2007, 203) points out, experimentation is necessary because collective action theory is in need of considerable further development.

[A] key lesson of research on collective action theory is recognizing the complex linkages among variables at multiple levels that together affect individual reputations, trust, and reciprocity as these, in turn, affect levels of cooperation and joint benefits. Conducting empirical research is thus extremely challenging... The reason that experimental research has become such an important method for testing theory is that it is a method for controlling the setting of many variables while changing only one or two variables at a time... Instead of looking at all of the potential variables, one needs to focus in on a well-

defined but narrow chain of relationships... One can then conduct analysis of a limited set of variables that are posited to have a strong causal relationship... the theory of collective action is not only one of the most important subjects for political scientists, it is also one of the most challenging.

Ostrom's view emphasizes the need for the third strategy proposed here: we must push and pull by designing and testing until we get it right. As noted above, testing solutions to the problem selected here cannot be effective with small groups, so it must be done by the fifth strategy of thought experiment to do the pulling or testing of the third strategy of pushing and pulling (which also is aided by the fourth strategy of defining the problem to indicate the most effective push or design). Pushing and pulling is continued until it yields a solution-design that appears promising enough to warrant the cost of a trial in the real world of the politics of very large groups.

Applying the strategies

The application of these five strategies to produce an institutional design commenced with using the first two to gather information. In retrospect, it appears that I recognized a probability of democratic dysfunction from information gathered from my involvement in two types of work. One was my occupation as a bureaucrat - a government forester engaged in planning the management of a range of natural resources. The other area of work was my private pursuit of environmental concerns, which included campaigning on issues, political organizing and running for election to the state legislature. As democratic dysfunction became apparent from both perspectives, I started to try to find out how this might be rectified by using the fourth strategy of defining the problem. I would have then tested this definition and the type of solution it implied with the fifth strategy of thought experiment: imagining whether the indicated solution appeared both feasible to implement and likely to work. If this mental simulation implied that this solution would not work or was impossible or very difficult to implement, then I would have made another

attempt (the third strategy of repetition) at a definition (the fourth strategy) to try to indicate a more effective type of solution. The evidence showing that I had worked in this way was that I had simultaneously produced a definition of the problem and a design for the solution. This was not initially apparent, for it was only the design that seemed to have been devised, for this was written down (see Part 2) well before the problem was defined on paper (see Part 1). However, when the definition was done, the ease of doing it showed that, whether it was right or wrong, it was well formed in my mind. The third strategy of “pushing and pulling” had produced both a definition of the problem and a design for the solution. The definition included a classification of the characteristics of policy issues that appeared to be part of the problem and these are described in Chapter 4.

The push and pull of designing institutions can be thought of as an interaction of data with theory that begins when sufficient data are gathered to indicate the existence of a problem. The problem is then defined, which is an explanation and as theories are explanations, the definition of a problem may be close to being a theory of its cause. If the definition and the theory it implies indicates a design solution that we observe to be impossible to apply, we now have more data, which instructs us to try to redefine/ re-theorize the problem in a more helpful way. Redefinition may require more data to be gathered. If the new definition/ theory implies another design solution that can be tested, then this becomes the next step. Such a test might be any or all of three types: first, a thought experiment as noted above, which may be inconclusive as it has limited capacity to produce new reliable data; second, an inspection of the performance and operating environment of existing institutions that resemble this solution and its environment; and third, establishing the institution that appears to be the solution and running it to see if it works. Such tests may indicate that the design is flawed and if so, that data may be used to guide another redefinition of the problem.

“Pushing and pulling” is thus a cycle of gathering data (pulling), then defining/ theorizing/ solution design (pushing), then gathering more data by testing the design (pulling) and so on until a design is found that works well enough. The difficulty of “pulling” or testing theories/designs in political science appears to have enforced a

neglect of testing, so that for example in democratic theory, ever finer details are often investigated without testing the theory against the real world to see if these details are significant. This is the “fundamental obstacle to progress in democratic theory” (Fung 2007, 443) of unproductive specialization discussed above in the description of my second strategy of institutional design. Bond has also noticed this, as quoted above: “it is possible that political science has accumulated enough information about how and why politics work as they do”. Difficulty in recognizing whether information is significant can arise when it describes phenomena that have poorly understood interactions with other phenomena. This difficulty may be exacerbated if information cannot be quantified. Neglect of testing may also obscure the significance of a theory by allowing theory to focus on applying a particular method of problem solving, rather than on solving the problem. Donald Green and Ian Shapiro (1994; also Shapiro 2005)) consider that rational choice theory often makes this mistake. Strong preferences for particular methods, such as mathematical analysis or the use of assumptions from neo-classical economics may distort the scholar’s perception of a problem to make it amenable to these methods. However this may mean that the problem that is recognized is of little significance. This distortion of perception may be revealed by testing the proposed solution, for if this is shown to fail or to produce an inconsequential success then the problem is likely to be re-evaluated, so that it is more carefully defined or replaced with one that is more significant. Green and Shapiro’s stipulation that research must be problem-driven is expressed by my fourth strategy of careful definition of the problem. The third strategy of “pushing and pulling” assists this fourth strategy by checking that the problem is well-defined. In turn, the fourth strategy assists the second strategy because accurate definition of the problem indicates what information is necessary and sufficient to solve it.

This suggestion of a method for designing institutions is made to try to ameliorate a deficiency in the theory of institutional design. In *The Theory of Institutional Design* Robert Goodin (1996, 31) notes a “paucity of literature specifically on design issues” and that edition reflects this as none of its ten articles focus on how to produce designs. Seven of them basically discuss what designs should be able to do (Goodin,

Pettit, Coram, Hardin, Luban, Brennan and Dryzek) and the other three give descriptions of designs, of what they do and of what happens to them (Offe, Shepsle and Klein). Graham Smith's (2009) *Democratic Innovations* looks at what designs do and offers an analytical framework for assessing these capabilities. One of several capabilities identified by Goodin (1996, 40) as desirable is that we should "design our institutions in such a way as to be flexible... to admit of 'learning by doing' and to evolve over time. Thus, we might say revisability is one important principle of institutional design". This might seem equivalent to my third strategy of redefining/ re-theorizing/ redesigning, then testing followed by more defining and so on, but as this is a strategy for producing designs it is quite different from specifying the desired capability of designs. Goodin's 'revisability' allows for a new design to be produced by modifying one if it fails to work well enough, but as my third strategy is a way to produce designs it permits a more fundamental approach. It invites a design that does not perform well enough to be replaced by another that is produced by redefining the problem it is intended to correct. This may mean the new design is so different it could not be produced by modifying the design it replaces.

With the exception of its first strategy, my method for designing institutions may also have potential to ameliorate the problem observed by Held, Fung, Smith and others, of specialization obstructing progress in theory in some social sciences. My second to fifth strategies call for: careful definition of the problem being addressed in order to set up a theory of cause that indicates a solution; using this definition to identify the information that is necessary and sufficient to solve the problem; following up the defining/ theorizing/ solution design phase with a testing phase and repeating these two phases until the testing indicates an adequate solution; and doing this testing with thought experiment if necessary, which will often be the case in the social sciences. Thought experiment may seem too uncontrolled and subject to the imagination of the researcher to be useful, but it should make the researcher look outside her specialization to consider the "context and conditions of existence in the whole" (Held 1991, 4) in which her research is intended to be relevant and to produce results that are significant.

An interdisciplinary approach

This work draws on several fields of study, using concepts, theories and evidence from biology, ethology, political science, public choice, ecological and neo-classical economics, history and the evolutionary, social and cognitive branches of psychology. As indicated by my first and second strategies for designing political institutions, this search was largely for those generalizations and conclusions offered by experts that appear necessary and sufficient for devising a form of government that is likely to perform better than existing liberal democratic types.

Part 1

Diagnosing dysfunction

CHAPTER 2

Democratic dysfunction from fundamental structure

Possible causes of dysfunction in liberal democratic governments are sought here by inspecting the basic structure of these systems. Any that are identified at this level would be expected to cause other dysfunctions at higher levels in the political process. This focus on basic structure may therefore discover sites for remedies of dysfunction that are systemic, for corrections at this level could permeate along causal chains throughout the whole system. If remedies are not feasible to implement at fundamental causal levels, consequent parts of the causal chain may be inspected for sites that are more amenable to correction. If such interventions also seem impossible or difficult, then remedies may be restricted to the direct alleviation of symptoms. The findings of this “forward mapping” (Head and Alford 2008) procedure are compared later in this chapter with those of two backward mappings that take symptoms of government failure and follow their causes back through causal chains to try to find a feasible site for correction. These case studies are of the neglect of the long term in Australia and repetitive environmental mismanagement in the US. The first causes identified in such backward mappings are the least likely to be fundamental and the correction of these is therefore least likely to produce systemic solutions. However, if backward mapping is taken far enough, it may provide an independent indication of whether a forward mapping of dysfunction is accurate.

The function of democratic government

A search for dysfunction in the governments of liberal democracies must start with a clear idea of what the function of this type of government is. Primarily, it is to govern a state, as discussed below. Further, as a government that is democratic, it must enable the people to do this. If it is to be classed as liberal, this may be determined by the five criteria specified by David Beetham (1992, 41-2): the provision of freedoms such as expression, movement and association; the separation of powers between the executive, the legislature and the judiciary; representative assembly as “the most effective device for reconciling the requirements of popular control and political equality with the exigencies of time and the conditions of the modern territorial state”; a “limited “ function, in that the state does not restrict private goods unless this is necessary to provide for the public good; and “that the only criterion for the public good is what the people, freely organized, will choose”. Beetham’s definition of liberal democracy incorporates his notion of two basic ingredients of democracy, popular control and political equality of citizens as they exert this control (Saward 1998, 9). As discussed in Chapter 6/ ‘Evaluating democratic institutions’, Robert Dahl has interpreted political equality as equality of opportunity for control rather than as equality of exercised control and I interpret this equality of opportunity to be required by justice rather than by the competence of most citizens to exert this control with wisdom, which is Dahl’s reasoning (cited in Saward (1998, 17). Michael Saward (2000, 51, 52) takes the definition of democracy further than Beetham and others, stating it to be: “necessary correspondence between acts of governance and the equally weighted felt interests of citizens with respect to those acts.” This emphasizes that democracy is “responsive rule”, but as this is also conveyed by defining democracy as government by the people, this simpler definition will be used here.

It is stated above that the primary function of a liberal democratic government is to ‘govern a state’. To define the meaning of ‘govern a state’ I follow Mancur Olson’s (1965, 15) assessment that the “fundamental function” of a state is to provide public goods. Michael Taylor (1987, 1) also observed that the “most persuasive justification

of the state is founded on the argument that, without it, people would not successfully cooperate in realizing their common interests and in particular would not provide themselves with certain public goods.” This is not to suggest that governments provide only public or collective goods. They often provide individual goods like electric power, for example by selling such goods on the market as private firms do. However if it is necessary for a government to do this, it is because it is providing a public good, such as preventing market failures (like monopoly exploitation, or inability to raise the capital to develop a commercially viable production of a private good that would be useful to many citizens) or a minimal level of equality of access to medical services and education. It is therefore assumed here that to ‘govern a state’ means to provide public goods. It is also assumed that the only reason citizens need governments is to provide public goods, a notion that is supported by Beetham’s fourth criterion of the “limited” state. The aim of this investigation may therefore be restated as: to see how well liberal democratic governments provide public goods and if this appears defective, to see what might be done to improve it.

The meaning of ‘public good’ must therefore be clear. Their defining characteristic is that they are available to all members of a ‘public’: they are goods or services that are ‘non-excludable’ in their consumption or use by the members of that public. Two examples of publics are the citizens of a state and all of humanity. Public goods may or may not be ‘divisible’ (often termed ‘rival’), which is the property that their use by some diminishes the quantity available for use by others. If they are indivisible they are referred to as pure public goods. Public goods may be material things such as roads, street signs, lighthouses, bridges and clean air; and they may also be more or less abstract things such as national security, domestic security (including law enforcement and the system of property rights), the level of trust between citizens, and opportunities for citizens such as the opportunity to earn income and to use public schools and national parks. The wide provision of opportunity is essential if a democracy is to be considered liberal, for this produces freedom and equality for its citizens. In contrast to public goods, private goods are excludable, which means their

availability may be controlled by an individual or an entity - the owner of the private good.

Some scholars doubt the proposal that the sole function of government is to provide public goods and that its effectiveness must be assessed by how well it does this. For example, John Gerring and Strom Thacker (2008, 168-170) are sceptical because (a) it seems difficult to determine which public goods are worth providing and in what quantity and quality; and (b) few public goods are enjoyed equally by all members of a polity. Their first observation does not mean that democratic government must not be evaluated in terms of its provision of public goods, just that it is difficult to do this. This is because it is citizens who must make the evaluation and this poses problems of collective action and social choice. Their second problem does not appear to be relevant. Public goods are non-excludable, so they present the opportunity for all to use them and they are still public goods if only a few use this opportunity.

A crucial feature of issues about the provision, protection or elimination of public goods is that these issues usually involve private goods as well. For example the provision of a national defence force, a pure public good, requires the taxing of each citizen, which is a reduction of their disposable income, a private good. Another example is the river damming proposal discussed in Chapter 5 under the heading of 'The scarcity multiplier', where the protection of the public goods of beautiful scenery, a population of rare native animals and opportunities for river-based recreation compete with the provision of the private goods of water rights, hydro-electricity and the employment and income that these create. Even the provision of the public good of minimizing collisions on roads requires the restriction of a private good – the personal freedom to drive on whichever side of the road one might feel like at the time. This compound nature of most public goods issues means that a government making a choice on these is likely to be choosing between private and public goods. The production or protection of one usually restricts the production or protection of the other. In this competition for existence, private goods usually have the advantage because demands for these are facilitated by the market, by self-interest and by the speed and decisiveness with which an individual or an entity can

choose them. The challenge for democracies is to make their collective choices equally easy, quick and decisive, otherwise crucial public goods may be foregone for the production of private goods.

As discussed above, the first part of this investigation is to assess how well democracies enable citizens to provide themselves with public goods. To do this we must start by inspecting the competence of their governments in identifying and choosing public goods. In a democracy such a choice is a 'social choice', a choice made by the members of a group. Social choice may be direct, via some form of aggregation of the choices of all citizens, or indirect, through choices made by their representatives. The direct form might seem to require each citizen declaring (by voting) their order of preferences for the options on offer and then amalgamating these preference orderings into one social preference ordering for the whole society by some process that is considered fair and equitable to all concerned.

To assess the adequacy of direct or indirect social choice by liberal democratic governments we must investigate primarily whether these governments are likely to (a) recognize those issues where social choices really need to be made, (b) make good choices on these issues, and (c) be able to implement their choices to create or maintain the chosen public goods. To perform in these respects government must be able to make its social choices prevail, where it considers this necessary, over any individual choices (independent decisions of individuals or entities) for private goods that conflict with these social choices. It should be noted that 'government' does not include the market economy as this system is not concerned with making social choices of public goods for the whole society. The market economy comprises institutions facilitating individual choice of private goods. On the other hand, government is the apparatus that makes and implements choices of public goods for the members of the group it governs. A corporation is an entity that is a group comprising employees, shareholders, managers and directors so it needs its own government (a board of directors and CEO) to make choices of 'public goods' for that group. Although these are choices of public goods for those within that group, the same choices are choices of private goods for that group as far as the greater group (such as the state or nation) is concerned. The subgroup here is an entity as far

as the greater group is concerned. Part of the social choice task of democratic national government is to decide whether to regulate the activities of entities within the nation such as individual citizens and corporations so that their individual choices of private goods (which is what they are from the perspective of the nation) contribute to, or do not unduly interfere with, public goods that the government considers necessary for the nation. If national governments have difficulty in doing this, then to that extent they are dysfunctional.

From this it may be seen that a term such as 'capitalist democracy' refers to two different systems. The first is the market economy, a system for facilitating individual choice of private goods; and the second is government, a system for making social choices of public goods for a group such as a nation. Such hybrid terms may encourage different institutions and their functions to be confused with each other. The widespread occurrence of such confusion and the importance of minimizing it were emphasized by Reich (2007, 224-25) as he concluded his argument that democratic government has been overwhelmed by capitalism: "the two spheres must be kept distinct." A democratic government must be clearly understood as an organization run by the members of a group to provide public goods for those members. One very important public good is the market economy. This is 'public' because it is available for any citizen to use: it is a non-excludable good. Part of the job of democratic government is to make sure, if citizens want a market economy, that it exists and operates effectively.

The quite different functions of government and market mean that a failure to prevent public goods being excessively damaged by pursuits of private goods is a failure of government to control these pursuits. This is not a failure of the market. As Paul Samuelson and William Nordhaus (cited in Shaw 2002, 6-7, their emphasis) have pointed out: "Before we race off to our federal, state or local legislature, we should pause to recognize that *there are government failures as well as market failures*". An example of confusion about the roles of government and the market is the statement by economist Nicholas Stern (2007, viii) that anthropogenic global warming is "the greatest market failure the world has ever seen". However, as markets are not structured to provide public goods, they cannot be regarded as

failing in this case. Instead it is government that has failed to protect public goods from the activities of the market, perhaps primarily because there is no global government that might control the global market that produces greenhouse gases. Perhaps there is a tendency to blame markets for deficiencies in public goods because it seems easier to correct markets than governments. This is especially the case for a global public good for which there is no global government to be held responsible.

The different functions of market economies and governments may be further clarified by considering the meaning of 'economics'. The eminent British economist Lionel Robbins (1935, 16, 24) defined economics as "the science which studies human behaviour as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses." This definition is widely accepted. As it covers ends and means that may be private or public goods, it views economics as encompassing both market economics and the part of political science that studies the effectiveness of government in choosing public goods. Much of this part of political science is the research program of public choice. As public choice uses the methods of economics it may be described as the study of the behaviour of systems (governments) that facilitate the choice of public goods as ends, by using scarce means that have alternative uses and may be private or public goods. Market economics studies the behaviour of systems (markets) that facilitate the choice of private goods as ends, by using scarce means that have alternative uses and may be private or public goods. This delegation of functions between governments and markets gives the former the responsibility of choosing whether public goods may be consumed to produce private goods. As Robbins' definition of economics makes it a study of choice, then economics does not cover that part of political science concerned with power, which tends to be the focus of mainstream political science as discussed in Chapter 1. As economics studies choice, it is very closely related to ethics, so it is not surprising that the father of modern economics, Adam Smith, was a professor of moral philosophy. Amartya Sen (1987) emphasizes that the helpfulness of economics depends on the validity of the system of ethics that it uses and on the thoroughness with which it is based on this system.

Two requirements for human welfare (and even survival) make it necessary that government has the power to implement its choices of public goods. One arises from the social nature of humans. People must live in groups, so certain public goods, such as trust, equality, security and sanitary conditions are necessary for them to function productively in these situations. The other requirement is that physical limits to material public goods such as natural capital and ecosystem services mean that if groups grow then many of these resources may either develop some scarcity or their scarcity may increase. This means that choices must be made about which of these public goods may be converted to private goods and also how scarce - in a per capita sense - they should be allowed to become even if they are not converted into private goods. These choices may influence, and also be influenced by, another collective choice: the future size of the group. Government neglect to make these choices is discussed in Chapter 5.

Social choice by democratic government

A process that appears fundamental to the performance of democratic government is that, in order for a group to make choices of public goods, the preferences of the members of the group for these goods must be combined in a way that is fair. As noted above, such a procedure, known as a social welfare function, must translate the individual choice orderings of members into one social ordering for that group. In 1951, Kenneth Arrow produced a theorem proving that no single function can perform this translation in a satisfactory way. This led to the “conclusion that democracy is meaningless or that it can only be defended in the most minimalist terms, in that it merely ensures that governments can sometimes be removed” (McGann 2006, 9). Arrow specified six criteria as necessary to assure the fair representation of voters’ views in the result produced by a social welfare function. It is now recognized that the impossibility of such a function fulfilling all these criteria as it produces a social choice is of limited significance. This is because reliance on a social welfare function oversimplifies democratic social choice by

ignoring interpersonal comparisons of utility. It ignores the possibility that a good may be more important to some people than to others. If interpersonal comparisons are systematically incorporated into social choice then Arrow's impossibility and other similar results are avoided (Sen 1999). One element of this process is to democratically construct the menu of political choices before people express their preferences for the choices that are then on offer. The menu construction involves the sorting out, or deliberation, of what the issue really is and then what the important and realistic options are, on that issue. Only after citizens do this are they in a position to state their personal preference orderings and use a social welfare function to produce a social choice.

The democratic deliberation that produces the menu of choices requires public goods to be distinguished from private goods so that the former can be clearly recognized and weighed by citizens against each other and against competing private goods. However the distinctions between public and private goods may be obscure for citizens on many issues, so a great deal of disputation may occur before a widespread appreciation emerges that what was, for example, considered a private good or a bundle of these, actually includes important public goods. Slavery illustrates this problem. In Britain and America this issue generated much confusion, argument and strife over a very long time before a widespread appreciation developed that slaves as well as other citizens, should all have the same liberties and that these freedoms were public goods. The idea of human equality as a public good has now been extended widely in democratic societies (but not completely in many cases) across race, sexual orientation, gender, religion and opportunity. The provision of this public good requires the elimination of a private good: the personal freedom of a citizen to discriminate against others.

If a public opinion that public goods are at stake develops as an issue, citizens in a democracy must then select a menu which covers the most important choices involving these goods. Elmer Schattschneider (1960) has emphasized that politics is primarily conflict, not choice, and that a central objective of the battle is to define the alternatives for choice, for whoever succeeds in this has the advantage. Such struggle tends to eventually resolve all political choices into a contest between two

alternatives. This avoids Arrovian impossibilities because these do not arise when a social welfare function is applied to a menu of only two choices. Albert Weale (1992, 215, 227), endorses such political contest instead of total reliance on a social welfare function, provided that the contest takes the form of public debate and deliberation. He observes that effective social choice should not be seen

as a process of preference aggregation, in which there is a mapping from a set of individual orderings to a social ordering, but as a process of dialogue in which reasons are exchanged between participants in a process that is perceived to be a joint search for consensus... [This procedure would work] not with fixed preferences to be amalgamated, but with preferences that were altered or modified as competing reasons were advanced in the course of discussion... There are other values that we expect political institutions to satisfy apart from efficient preference amalgamation; for example, procedural fairness, lack of corruption and tolerable problem-solving capacity.

As Hugh Stretton and Lionel Orchard (1994, 61) observe, mathematical procedures such as that employed by Arrow “should help to design voting systems to elect politicians, rather than to choose policies”.

With these requirements for social choice in mind, the consequences of five fundamental features of liberal democracies are now inspected, to see whether they inhibit effective social choice of public goods. These features are common elements of representative systems. They are: the regular holding of elections, the frequency with which these are held, eligibility of incumbents for re-election, universal franchise and equality of the vote. In liberal democracies, these elements of electoral structure function within a recognition that citizens are fundamentally free and equal. This includes equality before the law, protection of minorities, the right to private property and privacy; and freedom for speech, assembly, the media and the formation and operation of independent political parties.

In the following three sections of this chapter it is proposed that these five elements of electoral structure tend to create dysfunction in liberal democratic government by producing significant confusion, conflict and ignorance. Three of the five elements produce some confusion about whether politicians or citizens are in

charge of government, which limits the incentive for either party to fully shoulder responsibilities for public goods. The same three elements also produce pervasive, intense competition between politicians, which further cripples the provision of public goods because it distracts politicians from being fully responsible for public goods. The other two elements of electoral structure compel politicians to follow constituencies in which informed public opinion is compromised with narrow or ill-informed public opinion. Politicians therefore make social choices that reflect some ignorance.

Ambiguous delegation

It is proposed that democracies are seriously plagued by uncertainty about who is leading the polity and that this is caused by ambiguity in their system of delegation. The significance of this is fundamental. Any group of people will fail to look after its interests if its members are not allocated specific responsibilities for each of these interests or areas of interest. Such failure in delegation will allow members to neglect to provide some public goods for their group, while those they choose to provide may be over-provided or inappropriately prioritized and scheduled. The primary delegation that is essential for any group to avoid such problems is its appointment of leadership, for this can then delegate the other responsibilities and authorities for providing public goods. When a group acquires effective leadership it immediately gains another public good: it avoids damaging struggles for power. Because of its systemic influence on the welfare of the group, even minor ambiguity about who is delegated to lead will create deficits in public goods and if these are fundamental, such as cooperation and unity, the group itself may collapse.

Uncertainty about leadership appears to produce failure by groups that was pointed out by Olson (1965), although he did not describe the cause in this way. He stated that large groups will not provide themselves with important public goods, even if every member of the group sees the need for these and how to obtain them, if there is no 'selective incentive' for each member to try to provide them. A selective

incentive is a personal reward, delivered only to those individuals who contribute to the provision. Such failure of large groups to provide public goods may be broadly ascribed to two causes. The first is that if members who act on their own, or even some who act together, are too few to provide such a good, then they will see little point in acting. In a large group this may prevent action because its size makes it difficult for members to communicate with each other, so they tend to remain isolated. But if they have selective incentives to act on their own, they will and the aggregate result of all or most members doing this may be enough to provide the public good. As discussed below, the communication problem in large groups may be overcome by strong leadership, enabling selective incentives to be delivered. In recent years the problem of communication has tended to be reduced by the rapid development of technology (Lupia and Sin 2003).

The second cause of members of large groups failing to produce public goods is that if one member does this she only gets the same benefit as every one else, but she has done all the work. Aware of this, she is tempted to wait for others to make the effort so that she can enjoy the good without having to contribute. Every member of a large group may do the same because the behaviour of each will hardly be noticed by the rest, so no public good is produced. The strong human trait of 'sucker aversion' may play a role here (Hibbing and Alford 2004; Orbell et al. 2004), as well as the temptation to free ride. There is considerable cross-disciplinary empirical evidence of a human predisposition to avoid "being played for a sucker" (Smith 2006, 1015). Both sucker aversion and the inclination to free ride may be overridden by employing selective incentives for members to make a contribution. Strong leadership may provide these incentives, because as Olson (1965) observed, these may take the form of social sanctions and social rewards. Leadership may stimulate an intra-group awareness that makes it more likely that if a member free-rides, he will feel guilty about it or suffer the disdain of fellow members through being seen to ignore the leader's call for contributions. Leadership may also prevent sucker aversion by indicating to each member that there is a probability that most will act together, so contributors will not be suckers. Strong leadership may therefore provide intra-group communication that assists large groups to feel and act like

small ones. If this is to solve the problem of collective action in large groups leadership must be powerful, but in democracies leadership is confused by the people having a large influence in choosing the policies of their group, as if they were its board of directors. If this collective leadership is to be strong enough to give selective incentives to the people it must be clearly seen by the people and they must see it as legitimate. For the people to recognize clearly that it is they who broadly direct government policy, they must not be thinking it is done by cabinets, prime ministers or presidents. And for citizens to see that their direction is legitimate, they must see that it is wise.

As noted in the previous section, the function of the directors of liberal democracies may be split into three parts: (a) to recognize public goods that are, or may become, important; (b) to make good social choices of these goods; and (c) to implement these choices. In order to perform these functions, all modern democracies have elections in which the people appoint representatives to devise laws and policies that produce public goods. This is done because it is far too difficult for the people to do it themselves. This raises the issue of whether a representative is a trustee or a delegate. Trustees are trusted: they are given autonomy to deliberate and to act for the common good, as they see it. Delegates are not granted autonomy: they must reflect the wishes of their constituents. As Iris Marion Young points out, good representation requires both approaches, together with continuing communication between citizens and representatives.

The representative's responsibility is not simply to express a mandate, but to participate in discussion and debate with other representatives, listen to their questions, appeals, stories, and arguments, and with them try to arrive at wise and just decisions... The responsibility of the representative is not simply to tell citizens how she has enacted a mandate they authorized or served their interests, but as much to persuade them of the rightness of her judgement... Strong communicative democracy, however, also requires some processes and procedures where constituents call representatives to account over and above reauthorizing them [by means of re-election] (Young 2000, 131-132).

In order to see how this communication might be improved, the current incentives for both parties to communicate are briefly reviewed.

Because representatives are selected by frequent elections and incumbents are usually eligible to run for re-election, democracies place new candidates and incumbents in a position where their primary incentive is usually to get elected or re-elected. This differs to a significant degree from the incentive they need to execute the three tasks demanded by good government: those of recognizing, choosing and producing public goods. To the extent that electors appoint trustees, they transfer to the politicians they elect the responsibility and authority to execute these tasks. So electors may not think much about them. If their representatives act accordingly, as trustees, and think seriously about issues, they are likely to develop views that are more sagacious than those of most electors, who will then not appreciate the utterances and actions of representatives that reflect their dutifully developed sophistication. Such incomprehension by voters would make them hostile to trustee politicians, who would lose votes at the next election. Politicians will therefore allocate a lower priority to the three tasks of good government than to the task of performing as good delegates for electors. In this role they are concerned to show they are carrying out the wishes of electors and are reluctant to admit that this means they are not fully focused on the three tasks of government. Also, they are usually doing some of these tasks, if only because it may be consistent with acting as delegates. With their strong focus on re-election, politicians will be reluctant to ask the people to think more carefully about public policy when the people have largely given this task to them, as trustees. This reluctance is reinforced by the awareness of politicians that most citizens want leaders and politicians know that they appear to be in this position. They therefore have an incentive to pretend to lead: so they follow citizens by providing them with an appearance of the leadership they want.

It might be expected that this confusion, of citizens wanting and thinking they have leaders while it is they themselves who direct government, might be compensated for by the expert knowledge and professional behaviour of public servants, but bureaucrats, even if they are fully benevolent toward the public interest, have limited freedom to act. If their expertise indicates a need for policy that

runs counter to strongly held mass public opinion, they will be tempted not to recommend that policy to their political masters. As upper echelon bureaucrats are selected by politicians, the bureaucracy wants to offer advice that politicians can implement without endangering their re-election. So bureaucrats are unable to influence very significant areas of policy and this allows the confusion about who directs the polity to make government negligent: nobody does a thorough job of recognizing, choosing and providing public goods. Parts of the task fall through a crack in the system that is here called ambiguity in the delegation of responsibility and authority. This crack is produced when the system of delegation makes candidates face elections, for this coerces them to present themselves as good delegates and trustees, which encourages pretence because citizens may not know enough about some public goods to realise what a good trustee may have to do. The crack is opened wider by the eligibility of incumbents for re-election and further again by the frequency of elections. A politician's performance in the last few years of a term of office is likely to be influenced by the state of public opinion that he or she anticipates for the looming election. This influence on incumbents will cover more of their term if this is short. If incumbency is limited to one term only, or if representatives were elected for terms of say thirty years instead of six or less, the responsibility of elected politicians to act as trustees and fully attend to the three tasks of government would be clear. This would reduce their accountability to the electorate, but as discussed below in 'Failure of accountability', the system of accountability is defective so this is not as costly as it might seem.

Because ambiguity in delegation not only produces some incompetence in democracies, but also as noted above, an element of deception by their politicians, electorally representative democracies arouse the distrust of electors. It appears that ambiguous delegation causes what Paul Whiteley (2004, 7) calls the "paradox of trust". This is the flouting of the classical Greek "elected principle" that citizens will trust representatives they can throw out more than those they cannot. According to this, citizens should trust people who are elected and the institutions they run, more than those that are not based on elections. However, some surveys in Britain have shown the opposite to be true, with low public trust in politicians and only modest

trust in government and the House of Commons, compared with high trust in the courts and the public service (Whiteley 2004, 7). Ambiguity in delegation indicates there is no paradox at all, for it is very likely to make those who delegate responsibility and authority suspicious of their delegates.

Democracy is described above as being directed by citizens, whereas the conventional terms are popular control and popular rule. Referring to citizens as providing 'direction' and acting as 'directors' emphasizes that they determine strategic, or long term goals that will be realized many years or several generations into the future. As discussed below in 'Ignorant directors' and 'Unconscious directors', citizens provide this direction rather thoughtlessly, because it is done by politicians following the often unexamined attitudes and values of citizens. Examples of the failure in policy that this produces are given later: in this chapter under 'Two backward mapping analyses of democratic failure', in Chapter 4 under 'Three cases of externalization of responsibility by liberal democratic governments' and also in Chapter 5. With citizens directing, politicians are left with middle level management: choosing ways and means of moving in the directions given by citizens. So politicians are essentially restricted to 'tactical' policy that goes several years into the future, together with short term 'operational' policy that covers the next year or two.

Many scholars interpret democratic delegation somewhat differently from the way it is presented above. Lupia and McCubbins (1998, 79) describe their approach by stating that the people, as democratic 'principals', employ elections to delegate their authority to 'agents' (representatives) and that this delegation succeeds (or fails) when an agent's actions improve (or reduce) a principal's welfare. However, the interpretation presented here is that principals attempt, by means of regular elections, to delegate to agents the responsibility to make decisions on the provision of public goods, together with the authority to execute this responsibility. On this interpretation, delegation succeeds (or fails) when the agent executes (or fails to execute) the responsibility that was delegated. This approach means that clear specification of responsibility is necessary if the success of its delegation is to be judged. The approach used by Lupia and McCubbins focuses on the need for

principals to be able to make sure that agents act for their welfare, so the “democratic dilemma” that they see is the difficulty for principals to do this when they have limited information about the intentions and performance of agents. However this problem is not as fundamental as the need to clearly specify the responsibility that is delegated. Lack of clarity about this not only makes the delegation fail to the extent that the agent does not know which specific responsibility to execute, but the lack of this specification deprives the principals of criteria for them to judge whether their agents are performing successfully.

Lack of clarity in delegation occurs in two ways when frequent elections are employed to delegate responsibility and authority. One is an uncertainty about whether any delegation has really been achieved, because the prospect of the principals exercising authority (and responsibility) at the next election means they exert much authority (and responsibility) between elections. The other vagueness is that if responsibility and authority are regarded as being successfully transferred to agents, but the area of this responsibility and authority is not well specified, it is then uncertain what types of public goods the agents are to attend to and whether the principals retain responsibility for some types. As discussed below in ‘Citizens as directors’, the attitudes and values of citizens have a pervasive influence on public policy in democracies, so it appears that in these polities the principals retain a significant area of responsibility and authority over this policy. This retention sets limits to the area of policy in which politicians may exercise responsibility and authority. As noted above, when democratic agents are elected, what appears to be accomplished is that their principals have delegated responsibility and authority for operational and tactical policy and retained much of the responsibility and authority for strategic policy. As strategic policy establishes limits for, and otherwise guides, tactical and operation policy, elections fail to delegate to agents a very significant part of the responsibility and authority for public policy. The lack of public specificity of what has not been delegated produces much of its ambiguity. The strong influence of ambiguity in delegation is illustrated by the failures in strategic policy noted above as being discussed later in this chapter and also in Chapters 4 and 5. The confusion about who directs in a democracy, which is caused by

ambiguity in delegation, is now investigated in some detail, by looking at who the real directors are, how well informed they are, what their state of knowledge does to the directions they produce, how aware they are of their role, what their competence does to democratic accountability and whether ambiguity in delegation is a constructive definition of a significant problem.

Citizens as directors

Although the ambiguity of democratic delegation means that neither citizens nor politicians perceive a clear responsibility to direct government policy, many observers in the US conclude, in effect, that citizens are the directors, because a “defining feature of democracy is government responsiveness to citizens’ preferences” (Druckman 2006, 405). Michael Xenos (2005, 164) observes: “Politicians and candidates are remarkably responsive to public sentiment... [because citizens who are] politically uninformed and apathetic... nonetheless occasionally engage in the active disciplining of representatives through electoral rewards and punishments”. Paul Burstein (2003, 29) states that “public opinion influences policy most of the time, often strongly. Responsiveness appears to increase with salience, and public opinion matters even in the face of activities by interest organizations, political parties, and political and economic elites.” James Druckman (2006, 406, 408) notes that

presidents will make appeals for policies when the public already supports the president’s position... particularly on domestic issues... [T]he bottom line is that public opinion affects the direction of policy... the president does not manipulate public preferences by going public; rather he highlights certain issues, making them salient, and as a result, public opinion subsequently has an impact on these issues (because Congress follows this opinion on these issues).

James Stimson has investigated the political influence of citizens in *Tides of Consent: How Public Opinion Shapes American Politics*. His assessment is summarized by Mark Brewer (2005, 632):

The bottom line of this book is that public opinion, specifically, public opinion change, is the most important factor in American politics. Political conflicts and strategies are dictated in good measure by its shapes and contours. Political elites (at least astute ones) are attentive of it and responsive to it. Policy formation is dependent on it, and policy outputs are ultimately reflective of it. In short, Stimson argues that public opinion drives American politics, and that political change is the result of shifts in public opinion. For Stimson, not all opinion change is the same. Sometimes, opinion change is fast and responsive, such as the spikes in presidential approval immediately after a national crisis or the fluctuations in presidential horserace polls during election campaigns. Other change is so slow as to be almost glacial or tidal in pace (hence, the "tides" of the title) and occurs in such small increments that it is almost always overlooked as it is occurring. In other instances, opinion change falls somewhere between these two types. Each type is important here.

These observations identify the public as the board of directors in democracies, which of course is what elections and their frequency (relative to the human life-span) are intended to ensure. Ilya Somin (2000, 147, 153) notes that although some researchers find that public opinion is followed much less slavishly than the views expressed above, "the case studies they themselves rely on show that public opinion constrains policy makers more than they claim." He concludes that "flouting centrist public opinion poses severe risks for politicians... [raising] the danger that close adherence to ill-informed public opinion might lead to disastrous, internally contradictory policies."

Some of the differences among scholars on the political influence of public opinion may arise because the influence of public opinion on issues of strong interest to most citizens is greater than that on issues that are peripheral to the personal concerns of the majority. However, as Burstein (2003, 29) has observed, claims that political responsiveness "varies across issues rest on very little evidence." He

therefore advocates “developing indexes of general public opinion across a very wide range of issues”, noting that “serious work on this problem has barely begun” (Burstein 2003, 38). The conclusion to be drawn is that public opinion is very influential in liberal democracies. Politicians tend to conform to this directorship by restricting their ‘leadership’ to actions that do not clash with the values and strongly held opinions of the public.

Somewhat counter intuitively, more evidence of directorship by the people appears to be provided by Graham Smith (2009 17, 18, emphasis in original).

Evidence from consultation exercises suggests that the deep scepticism expressed by citizens about their capacity to affect the decision-making process is often justified... Janet Newman and her colleagues argue there is often an orientation towards ‘enabling the public to operate within the norms set by the bureaucracy... a process of possible *incorporation* of the lay public into official institutions’... While public policy may praise the virtues of participation (and may even make it a statutory requirement), evidence suggests that organisational and professional resistance to participation is often an obstacle for successful engagement... It is not unusual to find the belief amongst agency officials that citizen involvement is not suitable for strategic level decisions”.

If directorship by the people is taking place largely unconsciously, or at least unreflectively, through the electoral process as would be expected from ambiguous delegation, then when public authorities ask for input from citizens on specific projects or policy areas, these authorities will be constrained by the broad directorship of the mass public to ignore any contrary recommendations from such consultations because the power of these is too limited, either because the consultation is made by a subsection of the mass public, or because it is restricted to policy areas that are subservient to those controlled by the directorship of the mass public, or because both factors operate together. What agency officials regard as strategic policy may in fact be tactical policy, for much strategic policy is set by the prevailing attitudes and assumptions of citizens. Politicians usually must accept this strategic policy: both they and their bureaucrats may not be aware of it or see much of it as axiomatic rather than as strategic policy that they choose.

Ignorant directors

Directorship by citizens is perversely strengthened by their well documented reluctance to deliberate policy and to participate in politics (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002). Because most citizens pay little attention to public policy it is very difficult for politicians to lead by attempting to develop or change the views of citizens on policy. The people are thereby left in charge, because politicians are responsive to their opinions. Stephen Bennett (2006, 120), has described this general disinterest in policy and politics in emphatic terms: "Low levels of political information among the mass public have been observed again and again." Jeffrey Friedman describes this as "one of the strongest findings that have been produced by any social science – possibly the strongest" (cited in Bennett 2006, 120). In 1964, Philip E. Converse made the first attempt to statistically describe the competence of citizens to offer sensible advice on affairs of state with his paper "The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics". Bennett (2006, 105) notes that this research served "to overwhelmingly confirm the worst fears of... democratic skeptics". Somin (2006, 255) notes that these observations remain valid: "More than 40 years after the pioneering work of Philip Converse, political ignorance remains as widespread as ever." Many others agree (Hardin 2006; Kinder 2006 and Zaller 1992). Friedman assesses the current significance of the work done by Converse and his colleagues at the University of Michigan in the following terms.

Subsequent research, inspired by the work of the Michigan school has amply borne out its "bleak" findings. Whether the question is what the government does, what it is Constitutionally authorized to do, what new policies are being proposed, or what reasons are being offered for them, most people have no idea how to answer accurately...

Most of this scholarship establishes that the public lacks the most elementary political information. It is paradoxical, then, that nothing more dramatically brought public ignorance home to public opinion scholars than Converse's paper, which focused on the public's ignorance of relatively esoteric knowledge: knowledge of political ideology...

The chief prescriptive implication is, I believe, that the will of the people is so woefully uninformed that one might wonder about the propriety of enacting that will into law (Friedman 2006, iv, v).

Larry Bartels (1996, 194) has observed that the “political ignorance of the American voter is one of the best documented features of contemporary politics, but the political significance of this is far from clear.” Voter competence depends not only on their levels of information but on how they use the information they have. Analysts have suggested that a mass public of fairly uninformed citizens could act as if they were well-informed through two processes. One is that the statistical aggregation of their choices may cause the uninformed votes to cancel each other - if the uninformed error is random - so that informed votes decide the issue. The other is that uninformed voters use heuristics (cues or information shortcuts) as labour saving devices to guide their vote. Merely by observing the opinions of like-minded citizens or groups, a citizen can vote the way she would if she were fully informed. Empirical studies (Lupia 1994; Bartels 1996) have shown that in some cases, voters can use heuristics as substitutes for being well informed while in others, neither heuristics nor cancelling ignorance by the aggregation of votes can compensate for voter ignorance.

The right question to ask is not whether heuristics always (or never) yield competent decisions, because we know the answer is no. The right question to ask is about the conditions under which use of particular proxies is necessary or sufficient for competent voting (Lupia 2006, 229).

Heuristics may fail when elites do not understand an issue well (Lupia and Johnston 2001, 203), perhaps because of partisan bias, or insufficient public debate and deliberation, or a lack of information. Bias or lack of debate may mean there has been inadequate demand for information, so more investigation is needed as well as subsequent public discourse to process the information it produces. Where politicians are the elites or proxies, citizen ignorance may constrain them to have partisan attitudes and limited understandings of issues in order to attract votes. An

illustration of how this has distorted and constrained public debate on the desirable size of population for Australia is given in Chapter 4/ Three cases of externalization.../ 'Size of population'. The importance of good information has been noted by Doris Graber (2006, 176):

Decision quality is very much constrained by the information available to decision makers at the mass as well as at the elite level. When that information is incomplete or wrong, it may be very difficult for mass publics and even elites to detect the inaccuracies and discover the truth... [for example,] the question of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

In addition to the issue of optimum size of population, three others that are difficult for both elites and citizens to debate are discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. These are global warming, unemployment and wants for scarce natural capital. Elites and citizens may not clearly recognize these issues and if they do they may not understand them well enough to make good choices of the public goods involved. Six causes of such ignorance by citizens are now suggested. These are all ways in which public goods tend to be ignored in favour of private goods, so that as they compete for the resources to provide them, public goods are neglected and private goods produced. Three of these biases are fairly stable over time, but the other three tend to be exacerbated by positive feedback. Chapter 4 adds to this understanding of the causes of ignorance of public goods by describing how some characteristics of the issues concerning them make it difficult for citizens to recognize these issues and think about them. The result is a chronic public ignorance of many issues that constrains politicians to undersupply some crucial public goods.

Fairly stable causes of citizen ignorance of public goods

The relative ease, urgency and effectiveness of the choice of private goods

In a democracy, the choice of a private good is much easier than the choice of a public good because the latter requires social choice while the former only needs the decision of one person or entity, that is, individual choice. The non-excludability of public goods requires the members of a democracy to discuss each public issue to try

to understand what private and public goods are competing, to decide what tradeoffs they want between these goods and then to aggregate their preferences in some way. In contrast, the individual choice of private goods is merely the choice of a person or an entity to either do-it-yourself, or purchase, or not. Purchasing is facilitated by the market, as its 'invisible hand' automatically elicits supplies and computes prices. This process also gives an impression that private goods have a very definite value - their price - but price actually registers exchange power rather than value. In contrast, those public goods that have to be purchased are not priced directly to consumers because they are non-excludable, so their value appears vague and thereby perhaps inconsequential. Moreover, many public goods are not priced as they are freely available to all from nature or society, so their value and even their existence tend to be overlooked. The urgency of looking after oneself with many excludable goods such as food, shelter, clothing, entertainment, recreation and medical care adds to the attraction of individual choice. In addition to these seductions of private goods and the individual choice that secures them, people are decisive in individual choice, whereas in social choice they know they are non-decisive, being merely one of thousands or millions of people voting together to choose or reject a non-excludable good (Brennan and Lomasky 1989, 49-50). As Anthony Downs (1957) noted, it is therefore rational for the voter to remain ignorant of issues concerning public goods. In these ways, the comparative ease, urgency and effectiveness of the individual choice of private goods encourage people to focus on choosing these instead of public goods. This tendency is generated by attractions created by the excludability of private goods. It is permitted because citizens are encouraged by the first primary democratic dysfunction - confusion about who directs government - to neglect their democratic responsibility to carefully consider and choose fundamental public goods.

Citizens' fear of being suckered by free-riders

The strength of sucker aversion in the human psyche was noted above. This predisposition can have a powerful effect on the provision of public goods because their non-excludability may lead some people to consider that because this makes

them vulnerable to free riding, private goods must be preferable. They may think that the “higher the proportion of resources that are allocated in a market way, where there’s no escape from paying for what you get and getting what you pay for, the more just and efficient the economy is likely to be” (Stretton and Orchard 1994, 55-56). This motivation for overvaluing private goods is also facilitated by confusion about directorship, for this allows citizens to neglect their responsibility to carefully consider needs for public goods.

Citizens’ fear of being suckered by government incompetence

Any observation by citizens of incompetence by democratic government will teach them to have little confidence in its ability to deliver. They may then see the market as more reliable and so focus more on securing private goods. This attitude will further erode the competence of democratic government and may make it a self-fulfilling prophecy. Again, confusion about who directs government gives citizens the freedom to take this attitude.

Whether Americans’ experience of bungling has produced scepticism of the capacity of government to produce public goods or whether other factors cause it, this source of bias towards private goods is strikingly influential in the United States. American economics journalist Robert Kuttner (2008, 75) describes it as an “undertow” on US government. “Regulation is still widely considered a pejorative word. Obama... must hose away a prevailing ideology in which large government endeavours are deemed to be outmoded by modern markets”. Kuttner (2008, 75-76) notes several popular American expressions of this ideology: “Government is generally perverse or incompetent... Tax cuts are one of the few benefits that governments can reliably deliver... Private markets invariably work better than government... [and] Democrats need to talk more like Republicans”. Within the last four decades, three presidents have expressed this mindset: Jimmy Carter - “Government cannot solve our problems, it can’t set our goals, it cannot define our vision”; Bill Clinton - “We know big government does not have all the answers.... The era of big government is over”; and Ronald Reagan - “In this present crisis,

government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem” (Kuttner 2008, 87-88).

Reluctance to correct financial markets is another rejection by US citizens of solutions from government. Joseph Stiglitz (2009, 46) assesses that “confidence in financial markets will not be restored unless governments take a stronger role in regulating financial institutions... Even former Fed chairman Alan Greenspan, the high priest of deregulation, admits he went too far.” Amartya Sen has given similar advice (2009). At George Mason University on 8 January, 2009, President-elect Barack Obama appeared to see that the pervasiveness of the “undertow” required a statement of the obvious: “Only government can break the cycle[s] that are crippling our economy” (FederalNewsService 2009).

Relatively dynamic causes of citizen ignorance of public goods

Distraction by status rivalry

Economist Eban Goodstein (2005, 218-219) has observed that “when relative consumption becomes important... people tend to overvalue increases in private consumption (given the negative externalities imposed on others), and undervalue noncompetitive public goods”. Some of the externalities he refers to are the costs of status rivalry. Richard Layard (2005, 7, 44) has described this rivalry in the following way: “Our wants are not given... We are heavily driven by the desire to keep up with other people. This leads to a status race, which is self-defeating since if I do better, someone else must do worse.” Doing better provokes retaliation, counter response and more retaliation, so status rivalry may escalate personal consumption indefinitely through positive feedback.

Status rivalry becomes widespread in society when people become well provided in basic needs such as shelter, food, security and companionship. They can then afford to focus more on comparing their private goods with those of their neighbours and their “relative consumption becomes important”. Citizens in democracies are assisted to overlook the public costs of such positional competition by confusion about who takes care of public goods. As citizens expect their

politicians to do this they tend not to notice when they themselves are damaging public goods with their rivalry. So the choice of private goods takes priority and some public goods suffer.

Distraction by adaptation

Another overvaluation of private goods arises from a common failure by people to anticipate a second psychological response: that their satisfaction with private goods also depends on how well they are doing relative to what they are used to (Layard 2005, 42, 48). This is known as adaptation or habituation. It operates vigorously on some things, but not on others such as the pleasures of friendship and sex, and the miseries of unpredictable loud noises, widowhood and caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease. Layard (2005, 49) observes that the "things we get used to most easily and most take for granted are our material possessions". Adaptation therefore escalates our desires for private rather than public goods. One expression of adaptation is that the level of income that people feel they require is usually not much below what they currently have. For example, over the period 1952 to 1987, the income that US citizens considered they required increased by 70% of their increase in real income (Layard 2005, 42-3). Another expression is given by survey results showing that if one's real income rises by a dollar then after a while one's required income has risen by at least 40 cents (Layard 2005, 49). As with status rivalry, adaptation tends to re-establish wants after an increase in supply of private goods, which produces a tendency for positive feedback in the valuing of private goods and a corresponding escalation in the neglect of public goods. This feedback is also encouraged by confusion about who directs public policy as citizens are left free to ignore the impacts of their adaptation on the provision of public goods.

Distraction by advertising

Half a century ago John Kenneth Galbraith (1958) pointed to sales promotion as another cause of neglect of public goods, which he called a "problem of social balance". He criticized a lack of

satisfactory relationship between the supply of privately produced goods and services and those of the state... The problem of social balance is ubiquitous, and frequently it is obtrusive" ... [Every] corner of the public psyche is canvassed by some of the nation's most talented citizens to see if the desire for some merchantable product can be cultivated. No similar process operates on behalf of the non-merchantable services of the state (Galbraith 1958, 198, 202-203).

"Social balance" is a straightforward concept for comparing private purchases with those "non-merchantable services of the state" that are paid for by taxes, such as law enforcement, defence and the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges,. However, the advertising of private goods is also likely to make many citizens neglect or undervalue public goods that are not funded, but which are also in competition with private goods because the production of both depends on the same resources. Natural capital is such a resource, for example biodiversity, wilderness, natural scenery, a stable climate and clean air, seas, rivers and lakes. When such resources are increasingly used to produce private goods they become scarcer and may thereby acquire prices. These prices rise with further increases in scarcities that are caused by increases in rates of use, or by depletion, or by both combined.

Galbraith's "problem of social balance" is an under provision of public goods in which the advertising industry focuses citizens on private goods, compelling democratic government to do the same. The advertising industry is permitted to distort government in this way because the first primary dysfunction, confusion about directorship, leaves citizens feeling free of obligations to carefully focus on public goods.

In common with status rivalry and adaptation, advertising tends to escalate wants for private goods through positive feedback. By increasing sales, advertising provides more funds for more advertising to further increase sales and so on. Galbraith (1958, 124) called this feedback the "dependence effect" a cycle in which "wants are increasingly created by the process by which they are satisfied". Sales promotion works by encouraging status rivalry and adaptation, so the three mechanisms form a feedback complex in which two positive feedbacks, status

rivalry and adaptation, are boosted by sales promotion, which may boost itself through positive feedback.

These six incentives for citizens to neglect public goods all work by making private goods appear more attractive. As is noted for each incentive, citizens allow themselves to be swayed by them because they are confused about their role of directing democratic government. This is now examined more closely.

Unconscious directors

The ambiguity of delegation produced by frequent elections leaves citizens partly, even largely unaware of their position as directors of government. As we have seen, this leaves them feeling free to want private goods, often with little sense that they should consider compromising these desires to allow the production or protection of public goods. Politicians are pressured by these private wants to make social choices that tend to be aggregations of choices of private goods rather than aggregations of choices of public goods. Over time, some public goods such as the environment will be progressively destroyed to provide the resources for private goods. In trying to correct this problem it should help if we can understand whether the lack of consciousness by citizens of their role as directors is deep and whether there are factors that contribute to it in addition to ambiguity of delegation. We may then better judge the urgency of altering circumstances and how this should be done, to make citizens more aware and responsible as directors of their government. It is suggested that five causes may produce this unconsciousness.

The first is that the delegation of authority and responsibility from citizens to politicians by means of elections is a very public, formal act in which most people are involved, so they tend to assume it does this and that the delegation is completed until the next election is held. Democratic systems that hold popular elections of presidents are likely to add to this cause of unconsciousness.

The second cause of citizens being unconscious of their directorship is that they may see a strong need for this to be transferred from them to delegates. Citizens

generally recognize that they do not have the time, expertise, institutions, facilities, interest and incentives for them to competently identify and choose public goods. As citizens can see the need for delegating this work they will welcome delegation and may thereby overlook that it still leaves much of the job with them.

The third cause is that politicians give the appearance that it is they who direct public policy. They do this mainly by making and implementing many decisions. However, as they have to face elections frequently, their decisions tend to be within the boundaries of the opinion of the general public - or if they exceed these, then they tend to be within the bounds of the opinion of their constituency - or if they exceed these limits on particular issues, then politicians attempt to counter the electoral cost with policies on other issues that satisfy more urgent desires of their constituency. This appearance of leadership by politicians is reinforced when they are called 'leaders' by the people, by journalists and by politicians themselves. It would be more helpful if representatives in democracies were never referred to as leaders, for they largely follow the electorate. A large part of the reason why this mistake is so persistently made is given by the fourth cause of citizens' unconsciousness of their directorship.

The fourth cause has a similarity with the second: it is another case of citizens wanting to imagine that politicians are leading. However the origin of this want is different in this case. It arises not in the practical need for specialists to handle a complex job, but in human nature. It appears to be a genetic predisposition to have a leader for one's group. It can therefore be pervasive and powerful, so it is discussed here at some length.

Primate ethologist Frans de Waal (2005, 232), has described humans as "Janus-headed": we are egalitarian, but with a desire to control and dominate. This means that we "often permit certain men to act as first among equals. The keyword here is 'permit', because the whole group will guard against abuses" (de Waal 2005, 78-9). De Waal (2005, 232-3) also describes this nature as a "bipolar" balance of egalitarian and hierarchical dispositions which makes people both dependent on, and sensitive to, hierarchies. The dependency arises from the need for harmony, which requires stability, which depends on a well-acknowledged social order. This requirement

produces the paradox “that although positions within a hierarchy are born from contest, the hierarchical structure itself, once established, eliminates the need for further conflict” (de Waal 2005, 64). Our need for a well-acknowledged social order means that we “crave hierarchical transparency” (de Waal 2005, 64). This interpretation means that we not only ‘permit’ a dominant individual to lead, but we have an instinctive desire for leaders who are strong, reliable and good for the group. These observations fit with the ideas of social psychologists Stephen Reicher, Alexander Haslam and Michael Platow (2007, 24), who observe that leadership is “the ability to shape what followers actually *want* to do” (their emphasis), making it partly a bottom-up process. This is a democratic citizen’s view of what leadership should be, so democracy appears congruent with the innate human need to have a leader, but only one who gives priority to the interests of the group. This makes the group the real leader, while the ostensible ‘leader’ is a symbol of this. The need to have a symbolic leader is very powerful because part of each person’s sense of self is their “social identity” as defined by their group, which is in turn partly defined by strong leadership (Reicher et al 2007, 25). So the “wise leader is not simply attuned to making identities real but also helps followers experience identities as real” (Reicher et al 2007, 29). The best leaders are therefore prototypical of the group, exemplifying “what makes the group distinct from and superior to rival groups” (Reicher et al 2007, 26).

The idea that most people in groups instinctively and strongly want a leader is supported by models based on evolutionary psychology. Humans are social animals and fall into the zoological category of “obligatorily gregarious” (de Waal 2005, 231). We have an innate desire to form groups and to join groups, a survival strategy that we have had for millions of years, perhaps even before we became a separate species from the ape that evolved into the orang-utan, which is not particularly gregarious. Evolutionary psychology indicates that the pressures of this group life acted on our ancestors to select predispositions for individuals to adopt social roles, such as leading, or following a dominant individual who leads in the interests of the group (Alford and Hibbing 2004; Barkow et al. 1992; Dugatkin et al 2003; Fehr and Fischbacher 2003; Keltner and Haidt 2003; Smith et al 2007; van Vugt et al 2008).

Psychologists Mark van Vugt, Robert Hogan and Robert Kaiser (2008, 186) suggest that human “populations contain individuals with genotypes predisposing them to either leadership or followership”. The latter will be the more prevalent in any population because any “increase in the frequency of leader genotypes reduces the payoffs for this strategy – because many would-be leaders compete and fail to coordinate – thus selecting against leader genotypes” (van Vugt et al 2008, 186). On this reasoning, most members of a group will have a predisposition to want a leader. Van Vugt and his colleagues (2008, 187-88) argue that this predisposition evolved over 2.5 million years of Pleistocene hunter-gatherer life in small groups of 50-150 individuals, creating an innate preference for reversed dominance hierarchy. This is a democratic style in which leadership is desired but is evaluated by group members “against egalitarian ‘hunter-gatherer’ standards such as fairness, integrity, competence, good judgment, generosity, humility, and concern for others” (van Vugt et al 2008, 188). In the small groups typical of the environment of evolutionary adaptation (EEA) (Thornhill 1997), intra-group communication was easy and effective, allowing members to make these evaluations in order to approve a suitable leader. The difficulty of intra-group communication in large groups means that such evaluations in these circumstances will tend to be superficial, so predispositions to lead and follow may be expressed with poor collective judgement. The physical activation of the predisposition to follow has been observed by Uffe Schjoedt (2010) and colleagues with functional magnetic resonance imaging. When a person listens to someone they regard as authoritative and trustworthy, they shut down parts of their prefrontal and anterior cingulate cortices. These sections of the brain play key roles in vigilance and scepticism when judging the importance and truth of what others say and their deactivation motivates the person to follow a leader. Subjects who do not regard the speaker as being charismatic do not have this response. Although these tests were done using religious authority figures, Schjoedt speculates that the deactivation should also be stimulated by listening to people such as doctors, parents and politicians.

Van Vugt and his colleagues (2008) suggest that in the current world, predispositions to lead and follow make leader-follower patterns emerge more

quickly in circumstances resembling adaptive problems of the EEA, such as internal group conflict and external threats such as natural disasters or attacks on the group. In such emergencies, followers will readily defer to the decisions of a single individual because in these situations the interests of leaders and followers converge. Natural selection in the EEA appears to have produced predispositions for followers to prefer different leaders depending on the problem they face, for example US voters tend to choose hawkish presidents when threatened by war and “show an increased preference for charismatic leaders and a decreased preference for participative leaders when reminded of their own mortality” (van Vugt et al 2008, 189). As van Vugt and his colleagues (2008, 191) express it, leadership “in the ancestral environment was fluid, distributional and situational.”

When decisive leadership is especially important for a democracy and citizens lack institutions to help them perform this role, the fluidity of their need for a leader will rise to the occasion. This may be happening in Russia. The confusion, stress and corruption of attempting to replace communism with democracy and capitalism appears to have made Vladimir Putin and his autocratic administration popular with many Russians. As Ellen Carnaghan (2007, 64) observes,

emerging democracies are vulnerable, not because unprepared citizens do not like democracy as they understand it, but because many average citizens do not understand the intricacies of democratic practice well enough... The fate of democracy in Russia remains vulnerable, then, in part as the result of actions by people in power who do not seem to value democratic institutions, but also because citizens may not sufficiently appreciate the opportunities that democracy provides to protect the future they want.

In democracies in which citizens directly elect their head of government, their unconsciousness of their position of directorship may be especially deep because the first reason for citizens to be unconscious of their role of leadership may synergize with the fourth. The direct and highly ritualized selection of a supreme leader thoroughly satisfies citizens' predisposition to be led, encouraging them to abdicate their democratic responsibility to rule. Historian Dana Nelson (2008) describes this effect in *Bad for Democracy: How the Presidency Undermines the Power of the People*. She

asks Americans to imagine an alternative: a system that is more democratic because the people direct the legislature and the executive by doing it consciously. Not only may the ambiguity of delegation be greater in presidential democracies than in other types, but the huge amount of money required for presidential campaigns helps the wealthy to influence the president, making government even less democratic. Barack Obama's campaign showed that the internet may be used to counter this effect, but such facilitation of small donations to presidential contests brings millions of ordinary citizens into more intimate contact with that process, so it may strengthen ambiguity of delegation by reinforcing the prospect that a new president will relieve citizens of their responsibility to govern themselves. Parliamentary systems in which the head of government is chosen by politicians may allow the people more freedom to see that it is they who must govern, for this head is merely a representative of their representatives.

Presidential campaigns can be emotionally engaging, drawing many citizens into politics with great enthusiasm. But this participation is strikingly focused on the emotional appeal of personalities, so the pros and cons of issues are neglected and public deliberation is minimal. When a new president is elected, the opinions and attitudes of the people are likely to be little more developed than before and the new 'leader' must then basically follow these or be replaced a few years later by one who does.

A fifth cause of citizen unconsciousness of their directorship may be that many of them consider it is not them, nor politicians, but special interests who occupy this position. Some of these have huge financial resources or large memberships or other forms of power that they use to deliver votes or other favours to those politicians who produce policies, laws and programs in return. The scale of the lobbying industry is obvious evidence of the power of special interests.

To summarize then, there may be five ways in which citizens of liberal democracies are kept unconscious of their responsibilities as directors: 1, politicians appear to be appointed to this position; 2, citizens want politicians to direct because they do not have the time or resources to do it; 3, politicians often appear to direct public policy; 4, citizens want politicians to direct them as most are genetically

predisposed to follow a leader; and 5, special interests appear to dictate policy to politicians.

If democracies are to function effectively, this unconsciousness must be dispelled, for as long as we have regular elections, electors are the ultimate authority. Citizens determine the strategic goals for society, while politicians choose the relative details of tactical and operational policy. It is essential that both parties clearly recognize this, for it is only then that each can try to do a good job.

Failure of accountability

As we have seen, the political ignorance of citizens means that their directorship of a democracy will, to some extent, make it irresponsible. Another way of describing this is that the accountability provided by elections, of politicians to citizens, is faulty because citizens are too ignorant and politically inactive to use it wisely. Over time, this irresponsibility may register in some way with many citizens, despite their political ignorance, for each will be affected by deficiencies in public goods. The legitimacy of government could then suffer, so that when it does manage to produce good policy it cannot muster the political will to implement it, which is likely to further damage its legitimacy as adverse consequences ensue.

Unconscious directorship by citizens will also damage the legitimacy of government. When citizens tend not to fully realize that they perform this role, when they lack institutions to help them direct and when they also expect to be led, they are open to others taking advantage of their power as directors. The stage is set for the manipulation of public policy by special interests. Public perception that this is happening then damages the legitimacy of politicians and government, so that citizens become further disengaged. This may feedback to escalate illegitimacy. Talented, public minded, principled citizens may be discouraged from trying to improve their country's policies by becoming well-informed electors, or by offering themselves as political candidates, or by working constructively as bureaucrats. Such alienation may at times flare into the outrage and protest of civil disobedience.

Unconscious directorship by citizens means that even in public goods issues where special interests are not motivated to prevail, the result may still be dysfunctional, for policy is likely to express the concerns of citizens who, through 'rational ignorance' (Downs 1957) and because they have delegated policy work to politicians, are focused on private goods. It seems likely that such malfunction was observed by Richard Clarke (2004, 238-9), who was National Security Coordinator for US presidents Clinton and G.W.Bush. "America, alas, seems only to respond well to disasters, to be undistracted by warnings. Our country seems unable to do all that must be done until there has been some awful calamity that validates the importance of the threat". Clarke was referring to the management of national security, but his observation applies to other public issues in the US such as the National Health Service, global warming, the global financial crisis and also foreign affairs, as discussed in 'Excessive competition' below. The Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan (2006) appeared to agree with Clarke's assessment when he declared at the Nairobi Climate Change Conference that, as we consider how to proceed beyond the Kyoto Protocol, "there remains a frightening lack of leadership."

Objections

The suggestion that liberal democratic governments will malfunction because of ambiguity in the delegation that creates them may be objected to by observing that malfunctions are commonly caused by powerful actors outside the government, who use it to gain private goods at the expense of public goods. If we choose to view these manipulators as being responsible for the failure of government we are assuming that we need not design governments to be capable of governing in the real world, where self-interest as well as benevolence influences affairs. This view also implies that blaming manipulators can make the government they control stop them.

The argument that the views of electors and the performance of politicians are often manipulated by special interests with wealth or other power may not reject the

idea that ambiguous delegation occurs, but see the fundamental problem as that of manipulation by special interests. However, if blaming these interests succeeds in halting their connivances, electors would still have incompetent views on public affairs, not least because ambiguity in delegation means they are not clearly asked to carefully consider public goods. Moreover, the only way this blaming could stop manipulation would be if it aroused citizens to the point where they are taking charge by demanding that their representatives outlaw it. But citizens 'taking charge' is what the ambiguous delegation view of the cause of democratic dysfunction calls for. As regular, frequent elections fail to fully delegate management from citizens to politicians, citizens are left holding the ultimate democratic responsibility to govern. They are directing, so as long as frequent elections are employed, citizens must somehow engage with the job and consciously, carefully do it.

The idea that ambiguity in delegation produces confusion about who is directing public policy appears to explain the observation by Claus Offe (1996, vii-viii) that neither political agents (whether organizations, groups or individuals) nor spectators "seem to have a very clear notion about their distinctive domain of action... What turns out to be surprisingly and essentially contested is the answer to the question "who is in charge?"

Excessive competition

In democracies, the competitive device of open election is used to generate vigour, ideas, accountability, balance and justice. The competition is between politicians and it is made almost continuous by holding elections every few years, usually somewhere between three and six years. This periodicity is described above as frequent because each cycle is a small part of the human life span, ensuring that elections pose a constantly perceived threat to incumbent politicians who are eligible for re-election. Politicians therefore tend to focus on gaining and holding office rather than on choosing good policy.

Competition between politicians

Ian Marsh and David Yencken (2004, 82) observe that in Australian politics, competition between politicians for votes has progressed to the degree that the “familiar competitive two party system is now itself a principal obstacle... to wise policy choices.” They describe some of this competition as “fake adversarialism”.

If the government declares a contentious issue to be white, and public opinion is divided or uncertain, the Opposition almost invariably declares it to be black. Yet in government, the Opposition may often have supported a similar approach... It happens because, when public opinion is divided or uncertain, rewards accrue to leaders who champion contrasting alternatives, even if they are hollow or only manufactured for political impact... The present system is distorted by the way electoral incentives trump attention to arguments based on considerations of merit and prudence. (Marsh and Yencken 2004, 32-33)

One way in which this behaviour is encouraged is that the competitive environment of electoral politics tends to select for politicians with a combative attitude (Leeson 2006). It also teaches this attitude to them as they campaign for office and as they perform as representatives. So politicians in democracies tend to see problems in terms of foes to be vanquished. They may want to defeat those who draw attention to problems or who appear to be causing problems, rather than wanting to understand why these people are behaving in such ways. So they may intensify rather than resolve antagonisms and conflicts. A report by *The Economist* magazine illustrates this tendency.

For two months, Kenya, East Africa’s most prosperous and supposedly stable country, hovered on the brink of self-immolation as two warring factions ripped the country apart after a disputed election at the end of 2007. Kofi Annan, the former Secretary-General of the United Nations was brought in to try to resolve the conflict... As ethnic violence raged nearby, negotiators from the two sides would sometimes almost come to blows

themselves as Mr. Annan tried to find common ground between them... Rival politicians can be brought into open conflict by elections, such as in Kenya, or now in Zimbabwe (Economist 2008a, 67).

In *World On Fire*, Amy Chua (2003) describes how competition from the democratic electoral process may inflame competition in the form of long-suppressed hatred against a market-dominant prosperous ethnic minority. Examples are the 'ethnic cleansing' of Croats in parts of the former Yugoslavia, the 1965 attacks on the Chinese minority in Indonesia and the massacre of Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. Such eruptions show the difficulties that democracy can produce in societies with strong latent or active competition.

Another example of combativeness in democratic politicians is provided by US Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush. In *Us vs. Them: How a Half Century of Conservatism Has Undermined America's Security*, Peter Scoblic (2008) sympathetically describes Reagan's shift from denunciation to negotiation in talks on nuclear arms reduction with the President of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev. This moderation of competitiveness was no doubt facilitated by Reagan's strong confidence in his ability to relate effectively on a personal, face-to-face basis. But Scoblic (cited in Power 2008, 68) observes it had previously not "even occurred" to Reagan

that adopting a war-fighting strategy, beginning with a widespread missile defense program, researching a missile shield, while increasing the military budget by 35 per cent, starting a new bomber program, deploying a new ICBM, and deploying missiles in Europe could be construed as threatening.

Samantha Power (2008, 68) writes:

Scoblic's account becomes most chilling at the end, when the same conservative voices that had long preferred confrontation to cooperation – such as Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld – actually become dominant players in George W. Bush's executive branch. On January 21, 2000, a year before he would move into the White House, Bush said:

When I was coming up, it was a dangerous world. And we knew exactly who the “they” were. It was us versus them, and it was clear who “them” was. Today we’re not sure who the “they” are but we know they’re there.

Having suffered through what one diplomat called the “enemy deprivation syndrome of the 1990s,” September 11 gave hard-line conservatives an opportunity to apply their pre-hatched theories; and from the start they sought to unshackle the United States from international agreements and to reduce reliance on diplomatic engagement.

Although Scoblic and Power are criticising conservatives, the fact that conservatives wield such influence in American politics means these analysts are criticising much of the character of American democracy. The affinity of a large section of this polity for combative politicians was illustrated when Republican vice-presidential candidate Sarah Palin described herself as a pit bull with lipstick, to enthusiastic applause from her audience (Scott and Bennett 2008).

The combativeness of many elected politicians means that they tend to be predominantly focused on winning: so they are often impatient with rules or principles that might hobble their efforts in any current dispute. They will be inclined to neglect to develop, discuss and urge the implementation of principles that could produce more constructive behaviour by all players. It might therefore be expected that politicians from democracies would fail to attempt to provide international leadership in establishing effective global institutions to enforce such principles as laws. Evidence for this weakness may lie in the absence of a world governing body that can devise just global laws and interpret and enforce them. Half of the 167 nations around the world are more or less democratic and although only 30 are “full” democracies (Economist 2008c), they are relatively wealthy and powerful but show no interest in using their influence to try to reform or replace the United Nations with a more democratic and effective global administration. It is obviously difficult for them to achieve this when they must gain the acceptance of authoritarian regimes such as those of China and Russia, but the lack of effort toward this goal is noteworthy. Two examples of democracies neglecting to advocate a global principle of justice are the support by the UK and the US for self-determination in the cases of Northern Ireland and Kosovo respectively, and the

abandonment of this rule by these powers in the case of Georgia versus Abkhazia and South Ossetia in August 2008.

Electoral competition in democracies creates factions and limits the openness and honesty of politicians because, as discussed above, they are tempted to pander to the ignorance of electors rather than risk alienating them with sophisticated policies. This pandering not only skews voting in legislatures, but also inhibits the development of public opinion by restricting and distorting the input of politicians to public debate. Instead of discussing issues in a constructive manner, they often denigrate political opponents, pretend with fake adversarialism and give evasive, self-serving responses to questions by journalists. Such behaviour hinders the development of public opinion and amounts to politicians wilfully constraining their provision and protection of public goods. Some of this corruption is obvious to many citizens, helping to produce the “paradox of trust” described above.

In Australia, the combativeness cultivated in politicians by their competitive environment appears to produce several prominent features of state and federal politics. One is an obsessive interest by the public in who is to lead political parties, whether in opposition or in government. This risks obstructing democratic government in two ways: it diverts citizens from being aware that it is they who direct government and it focuses their attention on personalities rather than on discussing issues, so the public opinion that politicians largely follow is not encouraged to develop. Another result of combativeness is also found in Australia: a rigid insistence by politicians that government is formed virtually exclusively from the party with the most members in the legislature, so that when the two major parties are equal in number a minor party may exert unrepresentative influence – a ‘balance of power’ situation. This insistence on opposition politics prevents much of the opinion of the public from being represented and deprives the government of much of the talent in the legislature. It is accompanied by parties trying to destroy each other’s public image rather than trying to negotiate for good policy. Opposition politics tempts governments to seek electoral advantage over the opposition by using public money to sell their policies to the public, especially before elections. An alternative to opposition politics is to make the whole legislature the government,

but this is anathema to most legislators because their competitive attitude makes them very intolerant of opposing views and groups. This attitude is fuelled by their need to attract votes with simple, strong signals of party image. The same intolerance may also make the internal affairs of each party a fractious business. Abolition of opposition politics would not eliminate competition but moderate it to a more constructive intensity, for politicians would still compete with each other to propose the best ideas for policy and to gain positions of status and influence within the legislature. This way of operating would give politicians less cause to compete with each other via personal attacks, though perhaps this might sporadically reappear as light entertainment rather than as a necessary public part of the job. The consensual democracies of Scandinavia demonstrate there is no absolute requirement that electoral democracy must be oppositional, for they commonly have governments comprising coalitions of minority parties.

Former US Vice President Al Gore (2007) points out that the costliness of television advertising exerts extreme pressure on US politicians to raise money. The expense of this campaign tool not only makes politicians more susceptible to passing legislation for lobbyists who pay, but it corrupts in another way: television promotions are usually made very brief for impact and to minimize cost. Brevity gives impact by eliminating balance and rational argument, leading the viewer to absorb a message without thought and just by impression. Payments for legislation pose temptations for both lobbyists and politicians to use this money for personal financial gain as well as for political campaigns. The Abramoff Indian lobbying scandal illustrates the complexity and scale of such corruption. It erupted over work performed by political lobbyists Jack Abramoff, Ralph E. Reed Jr., Grover Norquist and Michael Scanlon on Indian casino gambling interests for fees of an estimated US\$85 million. Abramoff and Scanlon grossly overbilled their clients and orchestrated lobbying against them in order to force more payments for counter-lobbying services. The lobbyists were accused of illegally giving gifts and making campaign donations to legislators in return for legislative action. Representative Bob Ney (R-OH) and two aides to House Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-TX) were directly implicated. Both Ney and DeLay were forced to give up their Republican

leadership posts. Ney was sentenced to thirty months in prison and Abramoff to five years, ten months (Schmidt et al 2005). The fact that they were caught makes it seem as if democracy worked, but the case also illustrates how the competitive pressures of electoral politics help special interests to buy legislation.

Corporations may, in effect, also buy legislation or government projects by rewarding a representative who favours them by establishing a business in that legislator's district to improve their electoral prospects, or by offering a post-political career as an executive or consultant (Freedland 2007, 20). Such favours may be delivered by politicians introducing bills, lobbying, logrolling, making earmarks and introducing tax credits. Log-rolling is the bartering for votes to support a bill by its proponent undertaking to vote in return to support the bills of other legislators, or the bundling together of diverse measures into a single package to broaden their basis of support. Earmarking is the insertion into an appropriations bill of a special provision that favours one constituent or a very narrow group (Kirkpatrick 2006; Kuttner 2008). It is permitted by the legislator who proposes that bill in order to get votes for it or to allow that legislator to insert earmarks in the bills of other representatives in return for the favour. Tax credits create similar corruption of legislation. As Robert Kuttner (2008, 96) points out, these ploys "are hardly ever subjected to normal legislative hearings; rather, deals are cut behind closed doors and the general public only learns of the intended beneficiary afterward, if ever." Pork barrelling is another attempt to pay for favours in which representatives bribe electors for votes by spending public funds or locating business developments in their electorate. Policies and programs are often dictated by the interest groups able to lobby for, or buy them through such deals, rather than by the strengths of arguments for and against policies, as judged on their merits, either directly by the public or through their representatives. As a result, Chalmers Johnson (cited in Freedland 2007, 20), retired professor of international relations at the University of California-San Diego, concludes that in the US, "the legislative branch of our government is broken".

Such manipulation of electoral and legislative affairs could be reduced by legislation, but wealthy interests pursuing private goods make this virtually

impossible to enact. Public choice theorist Gordon Tullock (1993, 39-40), has described this type of behaviour as

the crucial weakness of democracy... [a] bias of the political process in favour of voters who are concentrated and well-informed on issues that are significantly relevant to them and against voters who are dispersed and ill-informed on issues that are less directly relevant.... [This is how] special interests penetrate in order to rent-seeking, to the general detriment of society as a whole.

But special interests are only able to “penetrate” because of self-interested motivations of politicians, such as desires for financial reward or success in competing for office. For the latter, politicians need funds and other help with campaigning, including ‘pork’.

Public choice theory has much to say about these problems but it is viewed by some scholars as unproductive because it tries to predict political behaviour from rational utility maximization by actors such as voters, politicians and lobbyists, while ignoring other motivations. Public choice research thus tends to see political behaviour as self-interested. However, this may be broadly accurate for politicians because they face competition that threatens to put them out of politics. For this situation, Peter Leeson (2006, 357, 364) has given a theoretical demonstration that

even when policymakers are partially benevolent towards the public, they are still led to cater to special interests and society fares no better off than if politicians were strictly self-interested. Political agent benevolence is thus an all-or-nothing proposition. Unless benevolence is total, policy looks the same... Despite its departure from motivational realism, if we get the same results with partial political agent benevolence as we do with zero, the standard public choice assumption is vindicated predictively.

Leeson’s analysis is based on competition between political agents for votes from citizens. The latter generally pay inadequate attention to public issues, so each agent must be at least as willing as her competitors to ignore public welfare in order to pander to public ignorance and to special interests who may deliver votes. As

Leeson (2006, 357) writes: the “absence of an effective enforcement mechanism for punishing politicians who cater to special interests gives political agents strong reason to doubt the commitment of their fellow statesmen to the public welfare”. Leeson’s analysis indicates that this doubt will make politicians produce defective public policy as they compete with each other for votes.

In the last few decades, competition between politicians has been intensified by the media dramatizing it and manufacturing it in order to gain commercial advantage. Jay Blumler and Stephen Coleman (2001) claim that this sensationalism has developed because a weakening of traditional social ties such as political parties, the nuclear family, mainstream religion, the workplace and social class has caused public opinion to become more fickle.

Relations between journalists and politicians have been transformed as a result. Given the fluidity and fickleness of public opinion, news coverage matters enormously to politicians and their advisors. They consider they are engaged in a daily competitive struggle to influence and control popular perceptions of key political events and issues through the major mass media. They aim therefore to permeate and dominate the news agenda so far as possible.

But political journalists have not taken such attempts to narrow and determine their news choices lying down. Wherever possible, they impose their own interpretive frames on politicians’ statements and initiatives, limiting the latter to compressed quotes and soundbites. They concentrate on issues that politicians cannot keep under control, ones that reporters can run and break open doors with and apply conventional news values to. They put a spotlight on any weaknesses, failings, and blunders that the professionalised politicians may happen to commit. In particular, they continually ‘unmask’ politicians’ publicity efforts, often saying more about the PR motives behind them than about the substantive pro’s and con’s of their records and proposals... The logic of this is like submitting political communication to the ravages of a shoal of piranha fish... Thus, in democracies where measures across a series of recent election campaigns are available, the balance of the evidence shows that media coverage of politics is diminishing in amount and becoming more ‘mediated’ (dominated more by journalists and their frames of reference), more focused on power tactics at the expense of issue substance, and more negative (Blumler and Coleman 2001, 9, 10, 11).

Commercial competition does more than exacerbate the competitiveness of democratic politics through the activities of the media. It is also a pervasive influence on the lives and attitudes of all citizens in democracies, for they must continually cope with and contribute to commercial competition as they consume and work. In some personalities this may encourage an ethos of looking for advantage to the limits set by law, so that ethical judgment is neglected and self-interest is followed to excess. Australian examples of this are given by Bob Burton's (2007) *Inside Spin: The dark underbelly of the PR industry*. The title of the autobiography of Australian Labor Party numbers man, Graham Richardson (1994), expresses a similar view of democratic politics: *Whatever It Takes*. Perhaps their training or experience in adversarial behaviour is why lawyers and business men often do well in democratic politics.

Competition between politicians may also be accentuated by ambiguity of delegation. As this produces confusion about who directs government it invites politicians to compete with each other for this position of ultimate power. But as it is the people who fundamentally perform this role in democracies, politicians are largely restricted to giving an impression of competing with each other for it. They will do this in order to gain status and also to gain votes by impressing electors with their leadership qualities. They will therefore advocate what looks like strategic policy and they will strive for dominance in the legislature or the executive. If electors need any convincing that government is directed by politicians, their observation of this behaviour should do it. If there was no ambiguity in delegation, politicians would be a little more restricted in their area of competition: they would be confined to competing for election to the legislature, for factional influence and for leadership of their party.

Reducing excesses of competition between politicians

Two approaches may be employed to reduce the damage done to policy and public goods by competitive struggles between politicians. One is to produce as much policy as possible without having politicians do it, which may be achieved by helping citizens to be more effective as the directors of government. If they are to do this job it must be made as simple and as powerful as possible, so it should be restricted to determining strategic policy. This approach not only takes strategic policy out of the hands of politicians but guides the subordinate policy they are left with, because strategy determines the broad directions and limits for all other policy. The new institution proposed in Part 2 is designed to work in this way.

The other approach is to minimize the competition between politicians. Here again, eliminating the confusion about who leads the polity is essential. If the delegation of responsibilities is made unambiguous, then the competition between politicians might be reduced in two stages. The first is that this clarification of responsibilities would confront electors - the 'principals' in democracies - with the fact that it is up to them to devise the rules to regulate competition between politicians, the 'agents' of the principals. One cannot expect politicians to do this, because as a general rule, regulators are more objective and effective when they regulate others, rather than themselves. Any improvement in the responsibility of political agents that is achieved through regulation by their principals may then produce the second stage of control: politicians being more responsible about considering and accepting any further changes to political structures that could remove incentives for them to compete with each other.

Excessive compromise

The "most famous objection to democracy, immortalized by Plato, is that democratic decisions are likely to be worse than decisions made by those better qualified by virtue of their knowledge" (Warren 2002a, 192). Liberal democracy

ensures that this problem will be ever-present through its universal franchise with one vote per person and equal power for each vote. One vote per person means one vote for one objective; for example in presidential systems each elector has one vote for a presidential candidate and also one vote for a member of each legislative body such as a house of representatives or a senate. In mixed member proportional electoral systems such as in New Zealand, Bolivia, Germany and Italy, the elector has one vote for a member of a legislature and also one vote for a party.

One vote of equal power for each citizen ensures that high ideals, imagination and informed or cultivated tastes are blended with low aims, insensitivities and disengagement in the public opinion that representatives and parties respond to with their policies and legislation. So competence is heavily compromised and the public goods that politicians deliver reflect average ideals and involvement. English philosopher John Lucas (1976, 254) evinced great concern about this, writing that where

a democracy altogether rejects the aristocratic principle, and regards it as undemocratic for anyone to acknowledge anyone else as his superior in artistic taste... artistic creativity is stunted, and the whole of society is submerged in a tide of tasteless mediocrity.

It is not only artistic taste that is overruled in this way. Public goods whose values become appreciated through close personal involvement or some other form of education or learning are strongly affected in this way. Examples are public goods necessary for particular lifestyles, forms of recreation, environmental quality, human rights and responsible foreign policy. An example of a public good necessary for good foreign policy is given by the following comments by Samantha Power (2008) on American foreign policy. The public good in this case is the competence of public opinion on foreign policy.

Bush's stated goals were to strengthen the US military, bring stability to Iraq and Afghanistan, combat terrorism, prevent rogue states and militants from acquiring nuclear weapons, and promote democracy around the world. In each case, two terms of

Republican rule have been disastrous for US national security. *The question is: Have American voters noticed?*

Joe Biden has. In an interview with MSNBC, Senator Biden, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was asked whether Democrats could be trusted on national security. He erupted:

I refuse to sit back like we did in 2000 and 2004. This administration is the worst administration in American foreign policy in modern history - maybe ever. The idea that they are competent to continue to conduct our foreign policy, to make us more secure and make Israel secure, is preposterous... Every single thing they've touched has been a near disaster.

Poll data show that *voters are in fact beginning* to share Biden's view and *at last* question Republicans' reliability on national security. On Election Day in 2004 exit polls showed that a majority of voters (49–44 percent) believed that the war in Iraq had made the country less safe. *Yet those same exit polls gave Bush an 18-percent edge in handling national security* (Power 2008, 68, emphasis added).

In this account, Power observes that the average voter is not well informed about public policy, is slow to learn and that the US government performs at about the same level. So rather than being partisan she is giving examples of behaviours by principals and agents in democracies that have long been identified by empirical studies, as noted above in 'Citizens as directors' and 'Ignorant directors'.

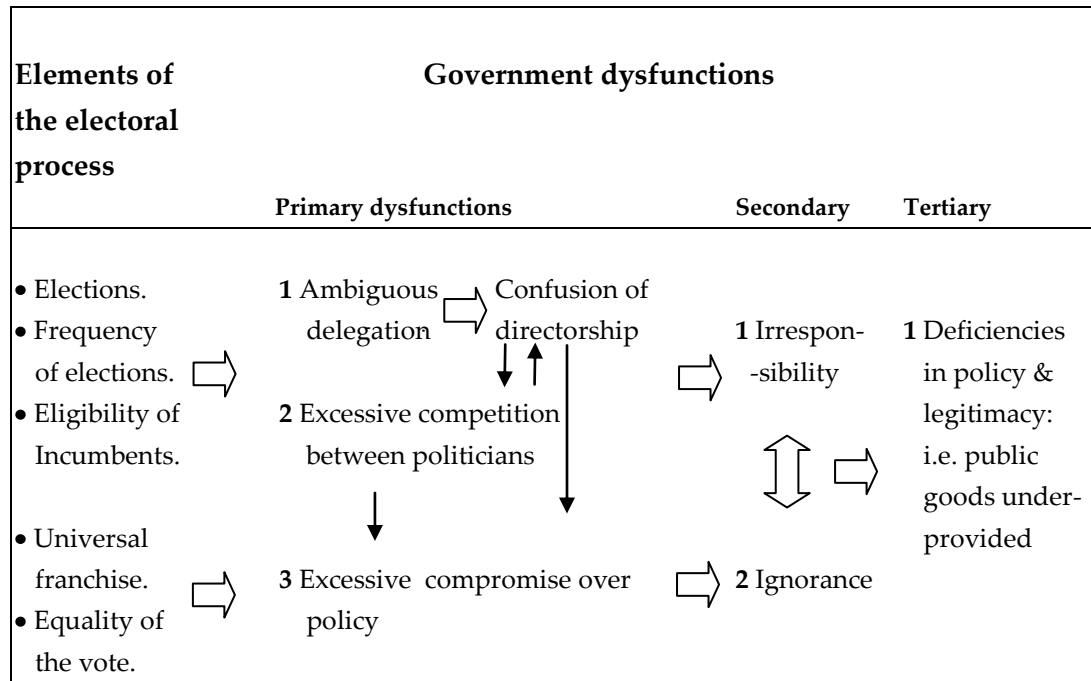
The problem of excessive compromise was indicated earlier in this chapter by observing that the accountability of politicians to electors is defective because the ignorance of the majority in liberal democracies means that the general public is often an incompetent judge of the performance of their representatives. Excessive compromise may be reduced by eliminating ambiguity in delegation to make the people more aware that they direct their government. They should then be more concerned to find ways of minimizing this compromise, for example by skewing the system of representation so that it preferentially represents the views of those in their community who are more likely to have informed, sensitive and sensible views.

Triple dysfunction

The dysfunctional tendencies of liberal democracies discussed above are summarized by Figure 1. This describes them as three primary dysfunctions that produce two secondary dysfunctions, which in turn produce a tertiary dysfunction, under-provision of public goods. This view of democratic failure is called the triple dysfunction hypothesis, in reference to the three primary dysfunctions. The five elements of the electoral process that are proposed to cause these primary dysfunctions are separated into two groups in Figure 1 to indicate their differing effects. The upper group comprises elections, their frequency and the eligibility of incumbents to run for re-election; the lower group is universal franchise and equality of the vote. The upper group produces ambiguity in the delegation of authority and responsibility, causing some confusion about whether electors or politicians are the directors of the polity. It also creates competition between politicians that interferes with the formulation and implementation of good policy. These two primary dysfunctions are indicated to interact by two arrows that are drawn thin, meaning that these effects may be slight. The downwards arrow indicates that excesses of competitive struggle may be exacerbated because confusion about directorship widens the scope for political agents to compete with each other. Without this confusion they would compete primarily for election to the legislature and to a lesser degree for dominance over each other for factional political influence and party leadership. Confusion over whether it is electors or politicians who are the directors may amplify this competition between politicians by inviting them to compete with each other for directorship of the polity as well. The thin arrow that points up from 'Excessive competition...' to 'Confusion of directorship' indicates that the need for politicians to compete for votes encourages them to act as if they are the directors in order to impress electors, which may encourage these principals to neglect to carry out their democratic role of directorship. Any such effect would add to the confusion about who directs government.

Figure 1

Triple dysfunction hypothesis



The third primary dysfunction is that universal franchise and equality of the vote make the polity compromise knowledge, ideas and sensitivity with ignorance and indifference. As described above under 'Excessive compromise', this effect is also encouraged by confusion about directorship. If the system of delegation was very clear that the people are the directors, they would be more likely to minimize any compromising of their wisdom with their ignorance in the expression of public opinion and its influence on public policy. As this impact of confusion about directorship may be limited it is indicated here by a thin arrow. Excesses in compromise are also affected by competition between politicians because this coerces them to express and enact the views of the majority of their constituents, regardless of the wisdom of these views, in order to secure electoral support. This effect is shown by an arrow from 'Excessive competition...' to 'Excessive compromise...'. It is drawn thin to minimize emphasis, because the same effect is also indicated by the thick arrow pointing to 'Excessive compromise...' from 'Universal franchise' and 'Equality of the vote'.

Confused directorship and excessive competition are expected to produce the secondary dysfunction of an element of irresponsibility in democratic government. Confusion about who directs will do this by preventing electors and those they elect from being clear about which group has the responsibility to deliberate and develop strategic policy. So both groups tend to leave these choices up to the other. If one group does try to assume responsibility, the ambiguity obscures whether that group should address strategic, tactical or operational policy, so irresponsibility still tends to occur. Competition between politicians for both directorship and electoral success will also encourage irresponsibility by focusing them on choosing policies that appeal to the ignorance of a largely disengaged electorate. The same effect is also described as the third primary dysfunction of excessive compromise producing the other secondary dysfunction: a degree of ignorance in the behaviour of the polity. These tendencies towards irresponsibility and ignorance mean that democratic governments will to some extent fail to function. In other words, as explained earlier in this chapter under 'The function of democratic government', they will under-provide public goods. This is noted in Figure 1 as a tertiary dysfunction.

The two-way vertical influence between the secondary dysfunctions indicates that irresponsibility and ignorance each tend to strengthen the other. It should be noted that Figure 1 indicates tendencies of the political system, not complete irresponsibility and ignorance. It thus offers at least a partial model of deficiencies in the behaviour of democratic governments. It also indicates that confusion about who directs is probably the major problem.

Two backward mapping analyses of democratic failure

The prediction of democratic failure given above follows the systems analysis approach of forward (or consequence) mapping (Head and Alford 2008, 16). It starts from basic democratic structure, assesses the type of behaviour this should produce in democratic government and then further follows causal chains to see what additional consequences may be anticipated. This mapping is now compared with

two cases of backward (or causal) mapping, in which an adverse consequence is inspected to see what may have caused it and then probable causes of this cause are deduced and so on back along causal chains, perhaps as far as initial factors. The first case of backward mapping investigates causes of neglect of the long-term in Australian politics and the second asks why environmental policy problems recur in the US.

Neglect of the long term in Australian politics

Marsh and Yencken (2004) have inquired into neglect of the long term by Australian politics, citing symptoms such as salinity, land degradation, deteriorating rivers, the effects of globalisation on employment, inadequacy of research and innovation, public cynicism about politics, massive expansion of foreign debt, problems in the health and development of children and youth, energy issues and greenhouse emissions. Environmental scientists David Mercer and Peter Marden (2006) agree with this concern. "There is little doubt that Australian politics has failed to grapple with the challenges posed by a post-sustainable development society. The unwillingness of liberal democracy to resolve environmental problems has been recognized for a considerable time". Political scientist Judith Brett has backed this assessment with an inspection of Prime Minister John Howard's legacy of federal government in Australia. She suggested his performance on global warming, related environmental issues and dependence on oil, made him

similar to the now faceless and nameless men who condemned Galileo for claiming that the world went round the sun... after ten years in power we know far more about how he sees the past 100 years than how he sees the next (Brett 2006).

Marsh and Yencken (2004, 31-41) diagnose the causes of neglect of long term issues by Australian liberal democracy as threefold: "fake adversarialism"; limitations of the policy-forming structure; and limitations in the availability of

information. As they start with symptoms and then look for causes, their analysis tends to focus on those which are most immediately responsible for the neglect. The fundamental changes required to produce lasting corrections of the neglect of long term issues therefore tend to escape attention. Marsh and Yencken (2004, 83) appear to acknowledge this in their closing two sentences. "All these changes will be in vain if they do not lead to effective action. There is therefore a final requirement - political leadership of vision, courage and conviction". This conclusion agrees with the diagnosis of forward mapping: that leadership is confused and therefore to some extent deficient. The cause of this confusion - frequent elections that are open to incumbents - is recognized by Marsh and Yencken (2004). They observe that the first of their three causes of policy neglect, fake adversarialism,

arises from the dynamics of the electoral contest between parties... The present system is distorted by the way electoral incentives trump attention to arguments based on considerations of merit and prudence... electoral needs have required public contention between the major parties. Issues have been distorted or fabricated to create the appearance of difference or to undermine opponents (Marsh and Yencken 2004, 31, 32-33).

This means we may replace "fake adversarialism" with a more fundamental cause, "the dynamics of the electoral contest", the operative parts of which have been suggested above to be ambiguous delegation and excesses in competition and compromise.

To explain their second cause of neglect, "limitations of the policy-forming structure", Marsh and Yencken observe that the "inability to create a public conversation about longer-term issues is partly caused by the dynamics of electoral competition between the major parties. It is *also* caused by a number of organisational features of the formal policy-making structure" (2004, 35, emphasis added). They list these organisational features as (a) work overload created by the restricted size of the policy-making executive; (b) lack of access for interest groups; (c) inability of the policy-making system to create interest coalitions around longer-term issues; and (d) weak working relationships between the Federal and State governments. Feature (b) here refers to a lack of formal access structured for fairness

to all stakeholders, not a lack of the underhand access for special interests discussed above under 'Excessive competition'. Marsh and Yencken do not remark that their four organizational features (a) to (d), are also likely to be largely caused by "the dynamics of the electoral contest". This happens as follows. The restricted size of the executive referred to in (a) is likely to be a response to the electoral imperative of being seen to provide strong, decisive leadership free of drawn-out internal argument, an imperative that arises from ambiguous delegation and excessive competition between politicians ("the dynamics of the electoral contest"). Problems (b) and (c) may be responses by politicians to the electoral imperative to be seen to be catering to the broad mass of voters, so they appear to be cases of excessive compromise. Politicians are reluctant to confuse their simplistic appeal to disengaged electors by appearing to cooperate with minority opinions, however benevolent to the public interest these might be, because these minority opinions are not understood by the mass of voters. Finally, problem (d) arises because Federal-State conflict is almost obligatory for politicians wanting to demonstrate their allegiance to their constituents and impress them with their leadership qualities. Such demonstrations are driven by excessive competition and permitted by the ambiguity of delegation. We may thus alter most of Marsh and Yencken's second cause of neglect of the long term from "limitations of the policy-forming structure" to "dynamics of the electoral contest" and in turn alter this to ambiguous delegation plus excesses in competition and compromise. So their second cause of neglect of the long term appears to have the same roots as their first.

Their third cause of neglect, "limitations to the availability of information" may also be largely ascribed to the same more basic cause, "dynamics of the electoral contest", which in this case, is the influence of ambiguous delegation. To see this we may start with Marsh and Yencken's observation that, with the exception of well established regimes of economic reporting at every level of Australian government, the reporting of trends and conditions is inadequate, especially in social reporting. They (2004, 38) point out that these deficiencies mean "issues are buried, neglected by the media and given scant attention by politicians", but they do not mention that these deficiencies are likely to be caused by a lack of demand for information, which

in turn would be caused by a lack of interest from the public. But such disinterest is what one would expect from ambiguous delegation, for this allows citizens to think they have given the entire task of choosing public goods to politicians, so they can focus on their private goods, including their purchasing power. Analysts, media and government respond to this strong interest of the public in business and the economy by providing the relevant information.

Marsh and Yencken (2004, 40) observe that the limitations they postulate as causing neglect of the long term, “political, organisational and information limitations... are widely acknowledged as the cause of present public disaffection with the major parties. They are at the root of public cynicism about politics.” However, as indicated above, inspection for possible causes of these causes appears to show more fundamental causation: the democratic structures of frequent elections, eligibility of incumbents, universal franchise and equal vote, which produce ambiguity in delegation, excessive competition and ignorance from compromise. Marsh and Yencken’s analysis amounts to an exhortation to politicians or to the disengaged electorate or to anyone who might have influence, to fix each deficiency. This seems unlikely to work for several reasons. One is that few citizens are listening, as discussed above under ‘Leadership by citizens’. Another is the number of defects to be corrected. A third problem is that of making any corrections continue to work. If an underlying cause such as poor structure is not corrected or countered by a new, permanent institution, it will prevail by continuing to exert its effects. The reforms suggested by Marsh and Yencken are likely to be ignored or fail because the existing electoral structure provides little incentive for citizens and politicians to support them. As these authors themselves recognize, the crux is leadership, so the major task is to make this effective and to do it in a way that is self-maintaining. We must consider whether we can clarify leadership roles by eliminating ambiguity in delegation.

Recurrence of environmental policy failures

Steven Yaffee (1997) has studied incompetence in administrative performance on ecosystem management in the US. In Table 1 below, he ascribes several types of policy failure to five behavioural biases of humans and human institutions. Yaffee proposes that the solutions listed in the right hand column may eliminate these biases and thereby produce better policy. This analysis was focused mainly on repetitive mismanagement of the northern spotted owl, but it recognizes similar behavioural biases in attempts to manage other species such as the red- cockaded woodpecker, black footed ferret, California condor, whooping crane, grizzly bear, gray wolf and whales. The method used here is backward or causal mapping as it starts by identifying policy failures ('policy problems') and inspects these for likely causes.

To compare the forward mapping of the triple dysfunction analysis with Yaffee's approach, each of his biases ('Behavioural bias') and suggested corrections for these ('Solutions') is followed in the table by a bracketed comment of L, C and I. These letters indicate that the relevant behavioural bias or solution identified by Yaffee is equivalent to one or more of the dysfunctions or solutions suggested by forward mapping. In these bracketed comments, D stands for directorship (so under 'Behavioural bias', D is confusion about who directs and under 'Solutions', D is clear responsibility for direction); C is for competition (so under 'Behavioural bias', C is excessive competition; and under 'Solutions', C is the moderation of competition, for example by cooperation); and I is for ignorance by the polity (so under 'Behavioural bias', I is ignorance from excessive compromise; and under 'Solutions', I is dissemination of information and greater political influence for those citizens who are relatively well informed). From comments D, C and I in Table1, it can be seen that Yaffee's biases and solutions tend to be covered by the dysfunctions and solutions suggested by forward mapping. Moreover, the fundamental structural reform recommended by forward mapping appears necessary if the actions that Yaffee's 'Solutions' call for are to be systemically driven and given permanent

Table 1.

The behavioural biases that generate environmental policy problems and suggested solutions (based on Yaffee 1997, 330)

Behavioural bias	Policy problems	Solutions
Short term rationality outcompetes long-term rationality (D, C, I)	Poor long term direction	Learn about the future. (D, I) Bind ourselves to the future through directives, information and “fixers”. (D) Promote innovation and experimentation. (D) Find creative ways to meet both short-term and long-term objectives. (D)
Competition supplants cooperation (D, C, I)	Impasses; inferior solutions	Develop processes that promote sharing and develop trust and relationships. (D, C) Protect those who may be exploited. (D, C) Focus on super-ordinate goals. (D, C) Be firm on ends; flexible on means. (D, C)
Fragmentation of interests and values (D, C)	Impasses; inferior solutions	Promote discourse & values ratification. (D, C) Build political concurrence. (D, C) Promote education of the public. (I)
Fragmentation of responsibilities and authorities (D, C)	Slow, inconclusive decision-making; diminished accountability; piecemeal solutions	Foster leadership. (D) Create coordinating mechanisms. (D, C) Structure incentives. (D) Develop clear measures of success and an ability to monitor performance. (D)
Fragmentation of information and knowledge (I)	Inferior solutions	Promote information flows within and between organizations. (D, C, I) Invest in better data bases. (D, I) Build centres of up-to-date expertise. (D, I) Use data negotiation. (C)

incentives to be maintained.

Yaffee’s backward mapping shows a number of policy problems being caused by five behavioural biases, so that at least fifteen different types of corrective measure are listed in the ‘Solutions’ column. Forward mapping produces a simpler set of solutions by suggesting that a multitude of policy problems are caused by just two

secondary dysfunctions, irresponsibility and ignorance. These, in turn are caused by three primary dysfunctions that are caused by the electoral process. Table 1 indicates that confused directorship (D) probably has the most dysfunctional effect of the three primary dysfunctions, so the most useful single solution might be to eliminate the ambiguity which causes it. This is also the conclusion reached in comparing Marsh and Yencken's backward mapping with the forward mapping analysis.

In comparing backward with forward mapping, it appears that the latter has two advantages. One is that its starting point of identifying fundamental structural problems immediately suggests systemic solutions in the form of either changes to basic democratic structures or new institutions. The other advantage is that, as it focuses on fundamentals, forward mapping is likely to identify a smaller set of remedial actions.

Summary and implications

Triple dysfunction is a structurally induced tendency for democratic governments to fail to internalize responsibility for the provision of public goods. This hypothesis blames irresponsibility on the structure or system of democratic government, rather than on politicians, bureaucrats, citizens or other actors. It suggests two strategies for correction. Either the democratic delegation of directorship from the people to politicians is completed by making the latter the absolute rulers, or the nature of the incomplete delegation is made explicit, so there is no ambiguity for politicians and citizens. A third strategy, that of making the people the absolute rulers in all levels of public policy is impractical because citizens do not have the time to devote to this. Some form of representation is necessary. The first strategy of making politicians the absolute rulers or directors calls for eliminating the frequency of elections, either by greatly lengthening the interval between elections, to say twenty years or more, or by eliminating elections altogether, for example by selecting representatives by lot. This strategy eliminates much of the accountability of politicians to the electorate, so

it risks the quality of public policy. For this reason it is also extremely difficult to get citizens to accept the strategy.

For the second strategy of making the incomplete delegation specific, the people and their politicians must be continually reminded of their respective responsibilities under current systems of electoral delegation. As these systems leave electors in the position of directors, they can only produce good public policy if they realize they must determine the broad objectives that they want for public goods and if politicians know they are restricted to choosing the relative details of how to achieve those objectives. Under this strategy, politicians must regard themselves as executives or managers for electors who are their directors and they should not call themselves leaders. It is unlikely that these roles will be permanently clarified by merely describing them. Most citizens would not hear the descriptions and in any case would soon forget them. Some politicians will ignore descriptions that demote them from leader to manager. Descriptions will also do little to help either citizens or politicians to perform these functions. But new institutions may be able to both continually remind citizens and politicians of their roles and assist them to perform in these different ways.

In respect of the citizen's job of director, Diana Mutz (2006, 150) cautions that deliberation and active political participation are seriously incompatible activities. A citizen who participates vigorously is unlikely to deliberate much and one who deliberates much is unlikely to be an active participant. Mutz gives two mechanisms for this effect: that the crosscutting exposure to policy issues that deliberation produces creates ambivalence about political decisions, which inhibits action; and crosscutting exposure heightens awareness of the potential for involvement in controversy, which also deters many from participation. In addition to these, I suggest two other effects. Paying attention to crosscutting arguments takes time and energy, so one then has less of these for participation. This attention also demands and cultivates an analytical or reflective attitude, which is the antithesis of the impulsive, action-demanding mood needed for participation. The difficulty of producing both deliberation and participation in the same citizen must be overcome to some extent by any institution that seeks to execute the second strategy outlined

above: guiding citizens, first to deliberate strategic policy and then to participate by instructing their politicians to execute their findings.

The corruption of the democratic system of social choice described here means that the individual choice of private goods is very often able to take advantage of weakness in social choice and overrule it. A major way this occurs is that citizens find it rewarding to avoid the ineffectuality and frustration of the muddled system of social choice by focusing on individual choice. The market is adept at encouraging them to do this, as Reich (2007) describes in *Supercapitalism*. So people focus on ‘me, now’, their narcissism grows, private wealth flourishes (for those who can get it) and the public domain decays. Sociologist Michael Pusey (2003, 183) is deeply troubled by this progression, noting that with

economic reform has come a thinning of democracy and an induced retreat of the people into a purely private sphere of caring only for one’s own, of mood states, of consumption, of recuperation, of therapy, and incommunicable anger at what is being done to them.

After many years of social research in Australia, psychologist Hugh Mackay (2004, 7-8) observes that Australians have become

[i]nfinately more snobbish, infinitely more stratified, with a much stronger sense of there being a wealth class... who think they’re there, they’ve made it, we deserve to be here, we’ve got to look after our children and those people well that’s just how it is... nothing to do with us.

Mackay’s (2004, 7) conclusion is that we need a much more “compassionate, harmonious, generous, accommodating society, paying excessive regard to the disadvantaged, the poor, the unintelligent.” Triple dysfunction is a way of seeing why many democracies are in this crisis and others appear to be drifting towards it. In Chapter 6 this diagnosis is used to prescribe a remedy. Before this is offered, the next three chapters investigate the accuracy of the diagnosis. In Chapter 3, the performances of some liberal democracies with structures and cultures that minimize triple dysfunction are inspected and compared with one that cultivates it.

Chapter 4 looks at the characteristics of issues that make triple dysfunction liable to produce serious mismanagement, exemplifying this with three issues that have some of these characteristics. The diagnosis of Part 1 is concluded in Chapter 5 with a more detailed inquiry into the way in which a fourth issue is mismanaged by triple dysfunction, that of human wants for scarce natural capital.

CHAPTER 3

Susceptibility to dysfunction:

Types of democracy

As the triple dysfunction hypothesis predicts that a major cause of under provision of public goods is confusion about whether citizens or politicians direct this provision, it indicates that under provision should be less pronounced in polities that facilitate overt, deliberative directorship by electors. Some democracies tend to do this with features such as: proportional representation of multi-member electorates (Milner 2002, 89); not having a popularly elected head of government such as a president; and having a consensual political tradition. This tradition includes governing with coalitions of minority parties and a culture of making social choice by discussion and negotiation among all interested citizens rather than an exclusive focus on power and winning. Citizen initiated referenda assist by emphasising the directorship of the people, but neglect deliberation. The Netherlands and the Nordic countries have many of these structures and characteristics (Arter 1999, 151-55) and they rank at the top of *The Economist* Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy (Economist 2008c). The Nordic nations have been described as state-friendly societies with society-friendly states (Grenstad et al. 2006, 122).

Danish political sociologist Jorgen Goul Andersen (2007) was a member of a project investigating power and democracy in Denmark from 1978 to 1982. He has observed that among the committee of parliamentarians initiating this project "there clearly was a feeling of losing power, and more generally... that there are increasing threats to the democratic idyll in the Nordic countries." This feeling was endorsed by that investigation, for which the "most original result... probably was the finding

that wherever we sought to measure power perceptions, we always found the feeling that ‘power belongs to the others’’. This echoes the triple dysfunction view, that a major problem is confusion about who directs. A subsequent study of power and democracy in Denmark in 1998-2004 produced mixed results, but identified problems of declining political party membership, a growing gap between a competent and resourceful majority and a marginalized minority that is becoming more disadvantaged, increasing influence of the media, and a transfer of power from the political to the judicial system (Christiansen and Togeby 2006). A similar study was carried out in Norway from 1998 to 2003 and its chair, Øyvind Østerud (cited in Gjessing 2003, 1), concluded that democracy “as a chain from elections to decisions is weakened all the way... Parties don’t mobilize many voters any more, and young people are less active than before, so the trend is likely to gather pace”. Together with Per Selle (2006, 564-5), Østerud observed that “the Norwegian political system is becoming less distinct” as large scale ideological movements decline and interest grows “in smaller and nimbler associations better at catering for individual needs and wishes, but also less able to plug members into the central decision-making institutions”. Along with other developments, these have been interpreted as revealing no general civic decline (Listhaug and Gronflaten 2007, 272), but as Selle and Østerud indicate, they appear to weaken the political role of the people.

In 1969, Swedish prime minister Olof Palme (cited in Oliver 1987, xviii) observed that “Sweden is to a considerable degree a study circle democracy.” Study circles are self-organizing groups of 5-20 citizens who choose to meet several times to learn about an issue. This is done in a democratic manner aiming at freedom of choice, critical thinking and exchange of ideas and knowledge. These groups meet throughout Scandinavia, in some European countries and have been introduced to the US, Australia and a few developing countries. Study circles have operated for a century in Sweden, where they are financially supported by government and reflect a fierce commitment by the people to the use of adult education for social change (Oliver 1987, xv, xvii).

Swedish political scientists Johannes Lindvall and Bo Rothstein (2006, 48) have noted that a 1985-1990 study concluded that their polity was “turning into a new

kind of democracy, more 'individualistic' and more similar to political systems elsewhere". Ten years after this investigation, its assessment was endorsed by a large Swedish government commission led by politicians, which called for the strengthening of civic society, more responsiveness by political institutions and a more "participatory democracy with deliberative qualities" (Lindvall and Rothstein 2006, 60). Lindvall and Rothstein argue that in Sweden there are

troubling indications for the operation of democracy... One common, if maybe simple view of the democratic ideal is that the state should do what the people want it to do. With the development of ideological state apparatuses, Swedish democracy looks more like a society where the state decides what the people ought to think and do... The system still spins, but it spins backwards... The question for the future is whether the strong state will be replaced by some new model that provides the necessary focal points for debates on public policy, or whether stable norms will remain absent due to an inherently obscure division of labour within Sweden's policy-making and administrative structures (Lindvall and Rothstein 2006, 47, 61, 47).

Triple dysfunction of course, suggests that this "inherently obscure division of labour" is the ambiguity of the delegation performed by the electoral system. Despite this, it seems that the "strong state" in Sweden is supported by a relatively sophisticated public. For example:

Sweden has long implemented one of the most progressive energy policies in Europe. The national government enacted one of the world's first carbon taxes in 1990. Ministers announced further ambitions last week through a plan that would increase renewable energy production to 50 per cent by 2020, transition the Swedish vehicle fleet to fossil fuel independence by 2030, and reach complete carbon neutrality by 2050 (Ben Block 2009, 1).

Political scientist at the University of Iceland, Svanur Kristjánsson (2004, 172, 153) observes that the semi-presidential constitutional framework in his country makes the role of the voter complex. Together with the decline of the party system and its membership, this means that active citizen control of government has all but

disappeared. Instead, politicians cater to a fickle electorate, which means that they restrict their policy development to a narrow focus on economic stability and growth. Kristjánsson's (2004, 153) "conclusion is that the Icelandic system of governance has become a rather messy and complicated political arrangement, thereby resembling the situation in other modern democracies."

Looking at the results of the Power and Democracy projects for Denmark, Norway and Sweden, Andersen (2007) observes that by comparison with other democracies they remain quite healthy and from what was known at that stage it would be surprising if the current study on Finland did not largely support this picture. He described the Nordic countries as having strong representative democracies that rest on a solid popular base with high and equally distributed political participation, with capable mass-based parties and people's movements. They have rich economies with solidary wage policies that ensure redistribution for a high degree of economic equality. Gender equality is highly developed and the regulation of business to make it comply with social goals is strong. Levels of political literacy, political engagement, electoral turnout and trust in politicians are mostly high.

However, in agreement with the Danish parliamentarians, Andersen (2007) notes signs of trouble: declines in party membership, electoral turnout and political trust; increased electoral volatility; weakening of voluntary associations; excessively competitive behaviour among the media; concentration of economic wealth and power; and an increase in the importance of the market, not only relative to the state (both internally and internationally) but in the management of the state. Some of this growth of market power is indicated by lowered ambitions for macro-economic steering and fewer instruments available to government for economic regulation. As Andersen and Hoff (2001, 75) observed six years before, in some ways "the period of Scandinavian exceptionalism is coming to an end." Andersen (2007) points out that the decline of parties raises questions: What is to replace this linkage between citizens and political decision-makers? Are there new forms of participation building up to replace those which decline? He suggests there is a need in Scandinavia for a

public debate on new democratic criteria for citizen participation, dialogue, deliberation and government responsiveness.

This sketch of democracy in Scandinavia indicates that triple dysfunction also occurs here, but to a much lesser degree than in many other democracies, presumably because the characteristics listed in the opening of this section tend to prevent them. Proportional representation, non-presidential governance (except for Finland and to some extent Iceland) and consensual cultures all tend to make the people realize that they are the directors of the polity. In addition to the Nordic countries having less confusion about who directs government than most other democracies, there also tends to be less competition between politicians because their political institutions and cultures support a more cooperative style of politics. Moreover, compromise over policy may not be as damaging as elsewhere because less confusion over directorship means that citizens feel more in charge of the development of policy, so there is considerable popular and political support for institutions that can help them think constructively about this, such as consensus conferences and study circles.

The case of the United States

The structure and performance of federal government in the United States provide contrasts with the Nordic democracies that appear to illustrate triple dysfunction. In respect of government performance, economist Jeffrey Sachs (2009, 20-22) expresses grave concerns.

When you compare the US with Canada, Western Europe and Japan, the news is sobering. Its child-poverty and infant-mortality rates are the highest, its life expectancy is the lowest, its budget deficit as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) is the highest, and its 15-year-olds rank among the lowest on tests of math and science.

A big difference between the US and the rest of the rich world is that for the past 30 years or so, Americans consistently rejected “government solutions” to the problems of health, poverty, education and the environment...

In the past 50 years, arguing for tax increases to fund the expansion of federal programs has been a political death wish... Jimmy Carter failed to close the deficit through higher taxes in the late 1970s. And Ronald Reagan made tax cuts the down payment on every election since.

In concluding a similar list of deficiencies for the US, economics journalist Jeff Madrick (cited in Parker 2009, 40) alleges that these “facts amount to about as conclusive a proof as history provides that the ideology applied in this generation has failed.” Evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins sees the strong religious belief in America as a style of thinking that is a problem, not only for this country’s future, but for the world. “In a Gallup poll 44 per cent of the American people said that they believe the world is less than 10,000 years old” (Dawkins, cited in K. Muir 2008, 17).

As these problems are under provisions of public goods, it appears that US government is failing to a serious extent. British political scientist Anthony King (1997) takes this view and ascribes it to an especially strong need for American politicians to focus on campaigning for election rather than on governing. King describes Americans as “hyperdemocrats”, partly because they very closely hold their representatives accountable and partly because of their pride in their political system. They emphasize the accountability of representatives in three ways: with very short two-year terms of office for members of the House of Representatives; by selecting candidates for election via direct primaries; and through weak support for politicians by parties, which makes elections very candidate-centred. As discussed in Chapter 2/ Ambiguous delegation/ ‘Ignorant directors’, most voters do not have a good grasp of many policy issues, so their tight control over their members of the House of Representatives is liable to produce poor public policy. This is compounded by the enormous personal expense of campaigning, for this focuses candidates on raising funds by pleasing wealthy special interests. The other aspect of the hyperdemocratic attitude of US citizens is that

as everyone who visits the United States quickly realizes, they are... inordinately proud of their government, or at least of their *system* of government. Far more than people in other countries, Americans are brought up to idolize, almost literally, both their governmental

system, as embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and the heroes of American political history (King 2000, 85).

Historian Dana Nelson (2008) has investigated this attitude by focusing on the importance and power of US presidents. Noting that this is accorded by citizens and cultivated by presidents themselves, she calls it “presidentialism”. She argues that presidentialism diminishes democracy by encouraging citizens to limit their participation to choosing their next chief. When Americans feel a need for better government, their tendency is to look for a better president, rather than to find ways of improving the quality of their own opinions on issues. It would also seem that a relative absence in the US of two major characteristics of the Nordic democracies adds to this confusion about democratic directorship. These are the absence of proportional representation and an approach to politics that is less diverse and less open-minded than that of the Nordic countries, as it lacks a left wing and is less consensual.

Another cause of government failure in the US is likely to be the strong American emphasis on the production and consumption of private goods. This is facilitated by democratic confusion about who directs government because that leaves citizens free to focus on private goods. As noted in Chapter 2/ ‘The function of democracies’, private and public goods compete with each other for resources, so confusion about who directs the choice of public goods will encourage the choice and production of private goods instead. The US history of colonization, displacement and destruction of American Indians, of slavery and of exploitation of abundant natural resources appears to have fostered an individualistic, materialistic and competitive culture, producing the most enterprising and vigorous market economy in the world. As King (2000, 81) observes, there

are few countries in the world whose collective ideology is more pro-business than that of the United States and where the climate of opinion is more favourable to free-enterprise capitalism. Yet American businesspeople – an immensely influential force in American society – do not love their government... This underlying suspicion and mistrust extends

well beyond the large corporate sector and is also deeply embedded in the small business and entrepreneurial psyche.

Kuttner (2008, 75) also notes the prevalence of this feeling and the damage it may do to democratic governance

Obama is constrained by a fiscal climate of opinion in which right-thinking people are supposed to be more alarmed about budgetary threats than about either the risks of another depression or a continued slow decline in the economic security and opportunity of most Americans. Regulation is still widely considered a pejorative word... large government endeavours are deemed to be outmoded by modern markets...

While presidentialism encourages US citizens to neglect their democratic role of considering and choosing public goods, many citizens encourage their government to do the same. King (2000, 97-98) observes that much mistrust of federal government has “extreme intensity... of anger, frustration and betrayal”. This mistrust has been reported as driving the Tea Party movement of 2009-2010 (von Drehle 2010). Some of it may arise from US citizens feeling robbed by government because their reliance on politicians, especially the president, means that they lack practice at perceiving needs for public goods, so the taxation needed for effective government seem excessive. Another cause of mistrust is offered by King (2000, 91).

In short, a major reason for declining trust in government in the United States since the 1960s has almost certainly been that a significant proportion of those at the head of the government have proved untrustworthy. They have cumulatively deprived the American presidency of much of its dignity.

This effect is likely to be decisive, cutting through the usual disengagement of most citizens on issues and politics, because as Susan Pharr (2000, 201) points out,

misconduct reports are likely to trigger what cognitive psychologists call “hot cognitions,” judgments that carry powerful emotions, facilitating the retention of such reports... And

indeed, empirically speaking, we know that across class, educational, and age lines, people tend to be remarkably aware of major misconduct cases, often far more than they are about many other domains of government action or policy.

The US appears to be in a difficult position. Government failure is evident and widely acknowledged, but the countermeasures that appear necessary are, to say the least, difficult to implement. Those indicated by King and Nelson are: lengthen terms of office for the House of Representatives; strengthen the role of parties by replacing primaries with candidate selection by party caucuses and by allowing parties to contribute more funds to their candidates' campaigns; and finally, replace the presidential system with a head of government that is not elected by the people but by their representatives. The last change should help to shift the public image of responsibility for deliberating public policy from political representatives towards citizens, but to go further and assist citizens to effectively deliberate public policy, new institutions are needed that not only help but encourage them to do this. This list of changes is formidable. The abolition of the US presidency seems the last thing that the well cultivated awe of this office would countenance. Moreover, few proposals of new institutions for nationwide deliberation by citizens have been made. These are surveyed in Part 2.

CHAPTER 4

Susceptibility to dysfunction:

Types of issue and three examples

The triple dysfunction hypothesis only looks at trouble and does not attempt to indicate the positive contributions of the five elements of the electoral process that it works from. This search for weakness is crucial because, as observed in Chapter 2/ 'The function of democracies', private and public goods usually compete with each other for the resources required to provide them. These resources may be human, manufactured or natural and any failure by government may be taken advantage of by interests that want them for private goods, resulting in under provision of public goods.

To begin to see how pronounced triple dysfunction might be and to help recognize the situations where it would be costly, possible characteristics of public goods issues are now suggested as being likely to produce some failure of democratic responsibility towards these goods. This responsibility includes careful consideration of the interests of external states, groups and individuals, if only because any lack of this may invite reprisal.

Issue characteristics that create problems for liberal democratic government

It is suggested that the following eight characteristics that may be found in issues concerning public goods are likely to cause liberal democratic governments to neglect or mismanage these goods. The first five characteristics are suggested to have

this effect because of the tendency of democratic governments to be ignorant. The last three – pervasiveness, competitiveness and externalizability – are suggested to evoke dysfunction even if these governments are well-informed, because they are likely to lack the high degree of responsibility required to effectively address issues that have one or more of these three characteristics. The more of the eight characteristics that occur in any one issue, the more it will tend to be mismanaged or ignored by democratic governments.

1. Complexity

Issues with this characteristic may have long causal chains, feedback loops, or be part of an interrelated web of issues. Social and ecological systems are rich in feedback and web structure, but as politicians tend to use short, linear thinking for easy comprehension by electors (H. Muir 2008, 41), their ‘solutions’ to social and environmental issues may make them worse (Forrester 1971; Yaffee 1997).

2. Abstraction

Constructive social, economic, environmental and international policies may be ignored by politicians focused on concrete monuments to achievement such as buildings, bridges, trade profits and quick employment, because the visual, monetary, or personal impact of these impresses constituents (Bennett 2008, 2-3). Abstract problems such as the development of equality, trust, community solidarity, public rationality and education tend to be too cerebral for easy communication to a largely disengaged electorate. Problems of risk are abstract when presented in statistical terms, so people and societies are inclined to ignore events with low short-term probability even if this becomes very high or certain over the longer run. Psychologist Elke Weber (cited in Bennett 2008, 2) states that for “most of us, risk is not a statistic. Risk is a feeling... If I feel scared, that overshadows any amount of pallid statistical information.” Abstract risks can therefore lead to disastrous inaction if they have high stakes, such as with nuclear proliferation, terrorism, hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, pandemics, peak oil, global warming and space

weather events such as coronal mass ejections (for a discussion of these see Brooks 2009).

3. Obscurity

Obscurity describes situations that societies have no previous experience of, or they have forgotten, or as Weber (cited in Bennett 2008, 3) observes, they do not recognize because humans have not evolved an innate response to the situation, through lack of evolutionary experience. Lack of recognition may also occur because electors not focused on governance do not recognize the issue as a public goods problem. Another form of obscurity is imperceptibility of the development of the problem, such as in 'landscape amnesia' and 'creeping normalcy' (Diamond 2005, chapter 14), also referred to as the 'boiling frog syndrome'. Lack of an obvious threshold or deadline for action may also amount to obscurity. Climate change presents this type of vagueness. An example of creeping normalcy being overthrown by a threshold to produce an active democratic social choice is given by the issue of whether to dam the Franklin River in Tasmania for hydro-electricity. The physical start of dam construction scheduled for late 1982 presented citizens with a dramatic deadline that galvanized civil disobedience that ultimately protected the river. It spurred into action a very direct democratic social choice by the people that may otherwise not have been made.

Another galvanizing effect in the Franklin River dam issue was the fact that the crisis was directly attributable to people. These can easily be demonised, such as business people asking for cheap electricity ('greedy capitalists') and politicians and engineers wanting to build monuments to themselves ('hubris', 'empire-building', obsolete thinking by 'political dinosaurs'). Paul Slovic (cited in Bennett 2008, 3-4) provides another example of this emotional responsiveness to human actors by contrasting the muted response to Hurricane Katrina with the far more significant and long lasting response to September 11. Katrina seemed like an act of nature and therefore failed to trigger our millennia-old fear of having our homes and lives invaded by strangers that was evoked by September 11. Evolutionary psychologists point out that a major part of our environment of evolutionary adaptation (EEA) was

a social existence of dependence on, and vulnerability to, other people. This situation created an “evolutionary ‘ratchet’” or “evolutionary arms race between manipulation and mindreading” (Orbell et al. 2004, 3, 13) that produced “the extraordinary sensitivity humans have to other humans” (Smith 2006, 1021). As this sensitivity to others appears to be “a predisposition ‘hardwired’ into our biology” (Smith 2006, 1016) it will express itself in democracies if their governments have trouble producing better judgments. As we have seen, democratic polities have a tendency to be irresponsible and ignorant, so this often allows the instincts of the people to prevail without their appropriateness for that issue being examined. Conversely, the appropriateness of action may not be examined if human predispositions are not aroused by that issue. Such an issue therefore has some obscurity for humans. Global warming appears to be of this type, as noted by Andrew Simms.

In their inability to take action commensurate with the scale and timeframe of the climate problem, the [UK] government is mocked... by Britain’s own history... The challenge is rapid transition of the economy in order to live within our environmental means, while preserving and enhancing our general wellbeing. In some important ways, we’ve been here before and can learn lessons from history. Under different circumstances, Britain achieved astonishing things while preparing for, fighting and recovering from the second world war [*sic*]. In the six years between 1938 and 1944, the economy was re-engineered and there were dramatic cuts in resource use and household consumption (Simms 2008).

4. Temporal remoteness of consequences.

Issues with this characteristic are long-term problems. Slovic (cited in Bennett 2008, 3) notes that it is “a very well established fact about human behaviour that we discount future negative outcomes a great deal, especially if it means having to postpone some immediate positive benefit”. As discussed in Chapter 2, Marsh and Yencken discuss the impact of this issue characteristic on democratic government in *Into the Future: The Neglect of the Long Term in Australian Politics*.

5. Spatial remoteness of consequences.

Problems of this type are geographically distant from decision makers and thus often easy to neglect (Diamond 2005, chapter 14).

6. Pervasiveness

The size of an issue, or habituation of citizens to it, may require a massive effort by democracies to generate the political will needed to manage the problem. This includes making sure that most citizens are informed and concerned as well as mutually supportive, so they have a high degree of solidarity that enables them to take responsibility and produce effective collective action. Confusion in democracies about who directs public policy hobbles their capacity to create solidarity, with the result that pervasive problems such as overpopulation, species extinction, risks of pandemics and global warming are likely to produce dire consequences before the political will to confront them can be generated. Authoritarian regimes may find it easier to forestall such calamities - if they anticipate them, and if they choose to act. An example of this facility is the ability of China to introduce strong measures to control the birth rate in order to limit overpopulation, which contrasts with the inability of democratic India to make such a resolute attempt to face the same problem.

7. Competitiveness

Rivalry over issues that divide the community can be magnified to a destructive degree by excessive competition between politicians in representative democracies (Dahl 1998, 150, 154-5). This may inhibit responsibility towards public goods as described in Chapter 2/ 'Excessive competition'. The difficulty that all nations have in acceding to calls for secession appears to demonstrate this as these situations are competitive, with separatists competing with the rest of the nation to secede. It appears that one of the causes of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda was exacerbation of Hutu-Tutsi rivalries by the competitive struggle of democratic politics (Courtemanche 2003, 191-193). Jared Diamond (2005, 317) supports this view by

stating that, in addition to desperate competition for land because of overpopulation, genocide resulted from hatred and fear fostered by the political elite as it tried to retain power.

8. Externalizability

‘Externalizability’ is the openness of a problem to be interpreted by citizens that it is caused or permitted to exist by something outside them or their polity when either citizens or their government are partially or wholly responsible for it. One form that this interpretation may take is conspiracy theorizing, in which citizens blame evil intentions in others, instead of blaming themselves, or blaming a group or political system with which they feel some affiliation. Any openness of an issue to such wishful thinking will encourage the irresponsibility predicted for liberal democracies by triple dysfunction. Confusion of directorship and fierce competition for votes give politicians strong motives to respond to externalizable issues by choosing ‘solutions’ that do not require effort or sacrifice by their electors, regardless of whether they cause the problem or not. This propensity of political agents to externalize solutions is likely to be considerable, for evolutionary psychology indicates that the capacity for deceiving not only others, but also oneself, is highly developed in humans (Trivers 1991). Politicians may therefore be supported in their externalizing by the egoistic and prosocial predispositions of each citizen to do it as well.

A powerful motivation for the wishful thinking that entices people to externalize solutions to problems is their inclination to reject evidence that clashes with their worldview. Slovic (cited in Bennett, 2008, 5) stresses that people “do their best to hold onto their worldviews because so much of their personal identity and social networks are tied up in maintaining it”. Researchers have found that the two worldviews with the most influence on perception and action seem to be the egalitarian and the hierarchist (Bennett, 2008, 4). The former is held by those who prefer a society where wealth, power and opportunity are broadly distributed and the latter is a preference for leaders on top and followers below. Slovic (cited in Bennett 2008, 4, 5) observes that what

we've seen through this research is that egalitarians are generally more concerned about environmental risks over a range of hazards, including global warming. Hierarchists tend to be less concerned... The truly disconcerting thing about this work is that it shows how difficult it is to change people's views and behaviours with factual information... People spin the information to keep their worldview intact.

This behaviour appears to produce enclaves of people with similar views (Sunstein 2002). In wealthy societies people have more ability to develop such enclaves by being able to choose their place of residence, select those with whom they interact and select the information that they find most congenial. These situations will tend to foster externalization in peoples' thinking about issues as they tend to be insulated from contrary views and evidence.

Three cases of externalization of responsibility by liberal democratic governments

The eight characteristics of difficult issues described above will give an uneven degree of failure by democratic government across the spectrum of public goods issues, according to their occurrence of these characteristics in each issue. As triple dysfunction produces a degree of irresponsibility and ignorance it tends to constrain democracies to provide those public goods that seem personally and urgently relevant to citizens. Examples are the availability of work, a prosperous economy, freedom from crime and good educational and medical facilities. Irresponsibility from triple dysfunction will also incline democracies to aim for quick results by treating symptoms rather than basic causes, so most government failure will occur in providing public goods that have only long term benefits. This unevenness of failure may conceal much of it from many citizens. Other failures they may not notice are neglect of minority groups within their polity, or failures in their polity's relationships with other polities. These group-based issues may be spatially

remote from most citizens and often have competitiveness and externalizability, which invite citizens to react instinctively to members of other groups with indifference or even antagonism.

Three public goods issues that are often mismanaged by democracies are now described, to see how significant such mismanagement can be and whether triple dysfunction appears to explain it. These examples are overpopulation, global warming and unemployment and they have a common theme: each has strong effects on the future availability of natural capital. This theme is pursued further in Chapter 5 with a description of inflammation of the wants of citizens by democratic governments, so that sooner or later people are frustrated by collisions with the limits of natural capital.

Size of population

Irresponsibility appears to be displayed in the reluctance of democracies to take the problem of overpopulation seriously. This is consistent with the triple dysfunction confusion about who directs public policy, for the possibility that their population could be, or could become, too large requires citizens to carefully consider this and if they choose an optimum size they must then decide what they can do to achieve it. Colin Butler (2004, 194) notes that after a surge in public concern about growth of population around 1960-70, interest began to diminish and overpopulation is now a politically incorrect topic. This attitude has been called the “Hardinian taboo” in memory of ecologist Garrett Hardin (n.d.), who noted that

Pacific islanders apparently have no hesitancy in explicitly giving taboo as a reason for stopping a discussion. By contrast, Westerners, with their cherished tradition of free speech and open discussion, would be embarrassed to say (for instance), “We will not discuss population because it is under a taboo”. Instead, they change the subject.

Chris Rapley (2006) has observed that

so controversial is the subject [of population size] that it has become the 'Cinderella' of the great sustainability debate – rarely visible in public, or even in private. In interdisciplinary meetings addressing how the planet functions as an integrated whole, demographers and population specialists are usually notable by their absence... Unless and until this changes, summits such as that in Montreal ('Beyond Kyoto') which address only part of the problem will be limited to at best very modest success, with the welfare and quality of life of future generations the ineluctable casualty.

The very personal basis of this taboo has been described by Robert Engleman (2008).

Discomfort with the topic is everywhere, not least among environmentalists, who grapple daily with the ways human beings are altering the natural world... Who wants to reduce humanity to a number, or to see themselves as one? And population trends touch on some of the most sensitive issues in our experience: sex, race, childbearing, family size, abortion. Yet anyone paying attention to human-induced climate change or the ongoing surge in global energy and food prices must sometimes pause to think about just how many we are.

As triple dysfunction predicts, in democracies this personal sensitivity is transmitted to politicians with little reflection or critical review, so that governments are unable to develop rational policy responses.

People who have strong interests in public goods that are vulnerable to population pressure, such as environmentalists and green politicians, have quickly recognized this irresponsibility of the system. They know that talking about physical and social carrying capacities and suggesting corresponding limits to populations arouses political scorn. Some of the complexity of this situation is described in *Overloading Australia: How Governments and Media Dither and Deny on Population*, by Mark O'Connor and William Lines (2008, 11). They observe that,

more than a decade ago, Labor strategist Gary Johns, the former Special Minister for State, identified high immigration and the lack of a population policy as key reasons for the Keating [Labor] government's fall. As Johns put it, "The Australian population has

overwhelmingly disapproved of the level of immigration to Australia under both Labor and Coalition administrations for many years.”

In his analysis, Johns endorsed a recommendation... that Australia should aim to stabilize population at between 20 and 23 million, with immigration kept to about 50,000 a year. To introduce such a policy might be difficult, said Johns, but it was a potential election-winner for Labor. It would be “overwhelmingly positive in national interest terms” and would also show respect for the electorate’s opinion.

But even with victory at stake, did Labor have the ‘ticker’ to take on the immigration lobbies? At the Labor Party’s national conference in Hobart in 1998, Kim Beazley, Labor’s then leader, broke through the Keating era’s wall of silence, and promised that Labor would give Australia a population policy.

Unfortunately, Beazley was soon trimming his rhetoric in other directions, so that at business dinners and fund raising occasions he gave the opposite impression: that Labor’s new population policy would be one of rapid growth... Before long, Beazley was talking of ensuring that we reached 50 million people. No doubt his director of campaign funding was breathing easier.

This account indicates that although Australians have some concern that there are too many of them, their politicians sense that they are more personally concerned about their employment and income and therefore want economic growth. At the same time, politicians want financial and other support from business in their campaigns for re-election and this also compels them to promote economic growth, which is easily done by encouraging immigration.

Another Australian example of democratic irresponsibility is that its recognition appears to have quickly reoriented the early policies of the two political parties with very strong reasons to be concerned about the pressure of population on natural resources: the environmentally concerned Australian Democrats and Australian Greens (O’Connor and Lines 2008, 166-175). This manifestation of the Hardinian taboo took strong hold in 1984 when racist interpretations and the personal implications of the issue made population too difficult for these parties to handle, so they ignored it until late in 2008, when Greens leader, Senator Bob Brown (2008), spurred into action by the concerns of his constituents about global warming, peak oil, a virtually nationwide shortage of water and many other issues, called for a

national debate. The policy paralysis that Brown, at long last, attempted to cure is wholly consistent with the irresponsibility predicted by triple dysfunction.

In 2002 the Australian Minister for Immigration Philip Ruddock (2003, 108) appeared to confirm this irresponsibility. "Two population inquiries in the past decade have... highlighted the very limited range of policy levers available for governments to influence population size... we have a very limited capacity to ensure any particular population target is actually delivered." In recent years net overseas migration into Australia has been rising and reached a record level of 253,400 in the year ending December 2008 (Australian Government 2010), which provoked public expressions of concern at the population exceeding 40 million by 2050. Although arrivals of illegal immigrants as 'boat people' create intense political debate, they total less than 4,000 per year. In April 2010, the Federal Government announced it was making yet another assessment of the population issue. As previous governments have done this to little effect, the prospect of a comprehensive and useful study seems dim.

Much of the population issue concerns procreation and as this is a very personal subject, politicians in democracies are averse to suggesting restraint by citizens. This may be seen in the contrast between the responses made by China and India to their population problems. The authoritarian regime in China implemented a one-child per family policy in 1979, whereas democratic India is unable to respond so decisively to the same challenge. The Chinese government has estimated that by mid-2008 the country would have had a population of 1.6 to 1.7 billion without this policy, instead of the 1.3 billion it had at that time. China has thereby ensured that its growth of GDP produces a greater per capita improvement than India has been able to achieve. It has also done this with less decrease in per capita availability of domestic natural resources than would have been achieved with a larger growth in population.

It may be relevant to note here, that "the role of rapid demographic change in China (from large to small families, with an average of two or fewer children) is rarely credited as central to the Chinese economic miracle" (Butler 2004, 193). Instead, for example, Mahbubani (2008, 67-78) ascribes China's economic

effectiveness relative to India as due to China making much better use of the abilities of its citizens. Under communism the Chinese had eliminated class distinctions, whereas in India the caste system continued to block much of the population from educational, political and economic participation. So when Deng Xiaoping decided in 1978 to convert China's command economy into a market economy, the country was able to develop quickly. Deng's pragmatic insistence on meritocracy in both the Chinese Communist Party and business greatly assisted this process. From 1980 to 2005 China's economy grew at an average of 9.5 per cent per year, compared with India's 5.5 over the same period (Gittins 2006). The omission by observers in democracies, of crediting population control with a role in China's economic success may be another indication of triple dysfunction, for its operation in democracies may have taught these observers not to see solutions to policy problems in terms of significant costs being borne by citizens. Liberal democracies tend not work in this way, except in desperate emergencies such as war, for it is only in a sudden major crisis that most citizens, become aware that each of them must make some sacrifice.

Global warming

A striking example of the democratic irresponsibility to be expected from triple dysfunction is the response of the United States to the reality and prospects of global warming. At the end of the Bush administration in 2008 it was the only nation with no intention of ratifying the Kyoto Protocol on global warming and it offered no credible alternative procedure. Many other liberal democracies react to the issue with lesser degrees of irresponsibility, such as deficient performance on Kyoto targets and the EU taking thirteen years after the 1992 Framework Convention on Climate Change to implement a dysfunctional Emission Trading Scheme. Until December 3, 2007, Australia had refused to sign the Kyoto protocol, a neglect that echoed that of the US. In view of the history of scientific knowledge on this issue, it is arguable that in 2008 the US was 20 years behind where it should have been in its response to global warming (Stern 2009). Global warming has been known to be a

high probability, extremely high-stakes risk for 30 years. In 1979 the US National Academy of Sciences advised that a “wait-and-see policy may mean waiting until it is too late” (Environmental Defense 2003). Wide recognition of the problem prompted the formation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 1988 and the urgency of the need for preventive action was emphasized in 1990 with a declaration by 49 Nobel Laureates, 700 scientists and the IPCC (Environmental Defense 2003).

This issue has always been recognized as politically very difficult to tackle, but each year of procrastination multiplies the magnitude of the task of curbing greenhouse gas emissions, in terms of both the speed at which it must be performed to stop the warming and the cost of the reformation of economies that grow more dependent on emitting these gases, with every year that passes. This failure of government is actually more comprehensive than this as it is also a failure to deal with ‘peak oil’ - the fact that world production of oil is currently near its historical maximum and within a few years will enter an accelerating decline while demand continues to rise.

As the country that has emitted the most greenhouse gases, consumes the most petroleum and is also the wealthiest and most technologically advanced nation, the US has the greatest responsibility to lead in forging the transition to carbon-free energy. This revolution requires new systems of supply, distribution and consumption which are extremely difficult to establish against the competition of cheap fossil fuels. The Obama administration is starting to turn this situation around with many billions of dollars being poured into reducing greenhouse gas emissions and stimulating scientific research, but this reversal may not be sustained and developed as opposing political voices are very strong.

A few details of the history of the US response to global warming illustrate its irresponsibility, while indicating triple dysfunction as the cause. At the 1992 Rio Earth Summit in Brazil, US President George H.W. Bush (cited in McKibben 2005) appeared to follow the unconscious directorship of US citizens, as well as the interests of his financial support base, when in response to suggestions that emissions of CO₂ be controlled he declared that “the American way of life is not up

for negotiation". The following Clinton administration (McKibben 2005) talked in a more environmentally responsible way, but had basically the same approach. In July 2001, George W. Bush's Press Secretary Ari Fleischer was asked if the new President would call on US car drivers to reduce fuel consumption to help tackle global warming. He replied:

That's a big no. The President believes that it's an American way of life and that it should be the goal of policy makers to protect the American way of life. The American way of life is a blessed one (cited in Miller 2001).

In 2006, as the impending oil crisis became obvious to growing numbers of electors, America's "addiction" to foreign oil was at long last acknowledged by President G.W. Bush (KRT-Washington, 2006). This is 27 years after President Carter tried to tackle the problem (Bacevich 2008, 32-41; Elliott 2006) but Bush's (2006) action on this was shaped by fear of electors for he carefully avoided asking them to help by agreeing to conserve energy. Instead, he essentially externalized responsibility for the solution by giving incentives to business to rescue the US with new sources of energy. He also promulgated similar evasion through his counter-Kyoto AP6 group, which did not specify limits for carbon emissions (Hamilton 2007). Over the last two decades, the White House has suppressed, altered or dismissed a dozen major reports on climate change, including the September 2002 annual report of the EPA in which the entire section on climate change was deleted (Flannery 2005). In his 2006 movie *An Inconvenient Truth*, ex-US Vice President Al Gore despaired at the inability of democracies, especially his own, to face global warming. Elizabeth Kolbert (2006) lamented the studied inaction of the Bush administration on this issue: "It may seem impossible to imagine that a technologically advanced society could choose, in essence, to destroy itself, but that is what we are now in the process of doing". The head of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, James Hansen (cited in Herrick and Owens, 2006), has assessed that if greenhouse gas emissions are not being curbed and reduced by 2015, there is a strong chance that positive feedbacks will tip the planet into an irreversible runaway

global warming sequence. He warned that the Bush administration is blocking the transmission of this message to electors.

A well-known aspect of democratic performance on global warming is the manipulation of policy by sections of the fossil fuel industry such as ExxonMobil, who appear more concerned about their immediate sales prospects than the future of society (Bull 2007; Hamilton 2007). These special interest groups distort public information and offer incentives to politicians to bias policy, with the result that Mark Chandler (cited in Williams 2006), a palaeoclimate modeller at the Columbia University Center for Climate Systems Research, observed: “we are not getting our politicians to vet their comments based on science... Instead we have a situation where our scientists are having to worry about what they say – can you see me sweating right now?” Hansen (2006, 12) has demonstrated this fear by invoking the protection of the First Amendment of the US Constitution before warning of the dire consequences of greenhouse gas emissions. However, there are some fossil fuel dependent companies that are concerned; either about society, or for their image of social responsibility, or for the profitability of their investments - so they warn government and the public about the need to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Their long time-horizons for returns on capital expenditure, for example a 50-year life for a coal fired power station, encourage them to attempt to develop public policy as a more reliable basis for investment. A scathing *Washington Post* op-ed (Worldwatch 2006) has noted that business activism may offer the best hope of moving the US government to address global warming and observed that several large companies are pushing the UK government to increase its efforts to reduce carbon emissions. Cinergy (Fonda 2006), a corporation that operates nine coal-fired power plants in the US, asked President Bush to regulate its industry for greenhouse gas emissions. Linda Fisher, DuPont’s chief sustainability officer, has observed: “We learned that we have to be ahead of legislation” (cited in Kluger 2007, 42).

In contrast with the failure of federal US policy on global warming, California has a more constructive approach, which nevertheless is also consistent with triple dysfunction. In September 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger approved the *Global Warming Solutions Act*, which requires a 25 per cent cut in the state’s greenhouse gas

emissions by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050. In doing this he virtually defied his own party as the bill received only a single Republican vote (Breslau 2007). Early in 2007 he issued an executive order requiring a 10 per cent reduction in the carbon content of all transportation fuels by 2020. Schwarzenegger (cited in Breslau 2007, 70) regards federal denial on this issue as “embarrassing” and says what “we’re basically saying to the federal government is ‘Look, we don’t need Washington’... let us let the world know that America is actually fighting global warming”. Several other US states are taking a similar line, although not to this degree.

Schwarzenegger’s approach reflects both his long-standing concern for the environment and his confidence in the ability of technology to solve problems. But an enabling factor may be what New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson (Breslau 2007, 70) terms Schwarzenegger’s “star power”. His popularity as a former macho muscle-man and film star may give him a freedom to choose policies that would cripple the electoral prospects of politicians without such a backup source of public approval. However, journalist Karen Breslau (2007, 72-3) notes

there is concern that his approach places too little emphasis on the need for Americans to reform their consumption habits, from running their air conditioners around the clock to driving (yes) their SUVs. “He likes to give the impression that you can have it all,” says Bill Magavern, a Sierra Club representative in Sacramento. “He is overly optimistic about the ability of the market to solve our problems.”

So although it looks as though “star power” in a politician may enable him to counter triple dysfunction to some degree, it still prevails and public policy does not accept the responsibility to pay costs.

Australian federal government behaves in a similar way to that of the US. An illustration is given by the story “The Greenhouse Mafia” by ABCTV *4Corners* (Cohen 2006), in which former Climate Director for the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization, Graeme Pearman, stated that “scientists are no longer as free to speak as they were”. Barrie Pittock, former CSIRO Climate Impact leader backed this up: “I was expressly told not to talk about... how you might reduce greenhouse gases”. In the same program, Guy Pearse, former

speechwriter for the Australian Minister for the Environment, claimed that “greenhouse policy is being driven by the mining and energy sectors.” This irresponsibility by Australian government was summed up by Tim Flannery (cited in Hodge and Wahlquist 2006, 8).

What we do with coal is shovel it out of the ground as quick as we can, contribute to a global pollution problem, and then say we don’t want to have anything to do with the international treaty that is meant to deal with this problem, which is Kyoto. We do the same thing with uranium. I just think that is morally abhorrent and very, very wrong.

Such behaviour appears to show triple dysfunction reflecting the egoistic and narrow solidary interests of disengaged electors and special interest groups. Responding to this government failure, the president of Australasian BP, Gerry Hueston (The Mercury 2005, 4), has appealed to his industry to work together to develop renewable alternatives to hydrocarbon fuels: “My view is that we are running out of time to deal with the environmental consequences of fossil fuels much faster than we are running down our stocks of them.” The Business Council of Australia has indicated a similar concern about deficiencies in public policy by calling for more effective strategic planning in politics (Marsh and Yencken 2004). So we see a few attempts by Australian private enterprise, whose role is to supply private goods, to try to do government’s job as well, that of providing public goods. As with Du Pont’s Fisher, some Australian businesspeople realize they must intervene to try to produce a stable and productive environment for their investments. But part of their reaction may also be social responsibility: business managers are members of the community and as they are often well informed they may develop concerns for society’s future well before the average voter acquires the knowledge to perceive the problems.

A complaint by the former Beatle, Paul McCartney, provides another indication of triple dysfunction in responses by democracies to global warming. McCartney was reacting to the situation reported in 2006 by the United Nations that world-wide, cattle-rearing generates more greenhouse effect through methane emissions than the carbon dioxide emitted by transportation.

The biggest change anyone could make in their own lifestyle would be to become vegetarian... It's very surprising that most major environmental organisations are leaving the option of going vegetarian off their lists of top ways to curtail global warming (McCartney cited in Reuters 2008).

By avoiding advocacy of vegetarianism, NGOs do not confront their members, potential members and other citizens with a very personal discipline. They seem to recognize that such advocacy risks damaging their causes by asking more of people than many will tolerate, especially if they have no assurance that all citizens will act together to make the effort effective. NGOs' avoidance of asking people to become vegetarian also indicates that they recognize politicians in democracies are in a similar position. They cannot ask citizens to pay significant personal costs for public goods if most of them have little appreciation of the need for these goods. The same situations were observed above for environmental organisations and politicians on another very personal issue: that of population. These examples of policy paralysis indicate that citizens of democracies are divorced from feeling responsible for public goods, which in turn indicates ambiguity in their systems of delegation.

Unemployment

When a lack of employment becomes severe, the almost invariable response of liberal democratic governments is to externalize their responsibility to provide the public good of employment for all, by looking outside the political world of electors and politicians to industry and commerce for an answer. These governments do this by trying to produce more economic growth. This is advocated as the solution as it will provide more work, which hopefully will produce more jobs. Private enterprise welcomes this approach, for it means more profit. And pleasing private enterprise is good for politicians, for it funds much of their election campaigns and runs most of the media. The alternative approach, of sharing more equitably whatever work

already exists, is usually carefully ignored - because it requires politicians to ask a large section, or even the majority, of electors to change their lifestyle, by working less for less income, so that the minority that are unemployed may have a share. This alternative strategy would also require that politicians ask businesses to reorganize themselves to facilitate the sharing of work. But triple dysfunction imbues politicians with some irresponsibility towards public goods and in this case it means that they will usually be the last to ask electors to pay a personal cost to produce the public good of employment for all. So liberal democratic governments avoid considering the sharing of employment and expand the economy instead. Triple dysfunction thereby produces the absurdity that labour-saving technology is used to make people work as much as before and possibly even more (an effect described as 'affluenza' in Chapter 5/ 'The scarcity multiplier'), rather than to give them more leisure time. As triple dysfunction allows citizens to react to unemployment without exercising self-discipline for the good of their democracy, it may develop a culture of complaint – an expectation by citizens that difficult personal circumstances can be dealt with by complaining to politicians rather than by shouldering a responsibility to cope with it. Such coping by citizens would include them appreciating the provision of unemployment benefits by the state; being prepared to relocate for future employment; regarding such problems as just a normal occurrence that may happen several times during their working life; and requesting their politicians to organize work sharing opportunities and incentives.

Herman Daly identifies the current inflexibility of the length of the working day, week and year as a crucial problem in sustaining quality of life.

For the Classical Economists the length of the working day was a key variable by which the worker (self employed yeoman or artisan) balanced the marginal disutility of labour with the marginal utility of income and leisure so as to maximize enjoyment of life. Under industrialization the length of the working day became a parameter rather than a variable (and for Karl Marx was the key determinant of the rate of exploitation). We need to make it more of a variable subject to choice by the worker. And we should stop biasing the labor-leisure choice by advertising to stimulate more consumption and more labor to pay

for it. Advertising should no longer be treated as a tax deductible ordinary expense of production (Daly 2009, 4).

This distortion of the choice between work and leisure by advertising is an example of its inducement to neglect public goods, as described in Chapter 2/ Ambiguous delegation/ Ignorant directors/ Relatively dynamic.../ 'Distraction by advertising'. The role of advertising in diverting attention from public goods is further analysed in Chapter 5/ 'The scarcity multiplier'.

The importance of work sharing for a sustainable economy is emphasized by Tim Jackson (2009, 180): "In an economy in which labour productivity still increases but output is capped (for instance for ecological reasons), the only way to maintain macro-economic stability and protect people's livelihoods is by sharing out the available work." Jackson notes that reduced working hours are usually beneficial for other reasons as well, such as increasing labour productivity and improving the work-life balance. However, it only tends to succeed under certain conditions. Experience in Germany and Denmark has shown that a fundamental pre-condition for reducing working hours is a stable and relatively low degree of inequality of incomes across society (Jackson 2009, 136). Recognizing this, Daly has recommended legislation in the US for

a minimum income and a maximum income... Complete equality is unfair; unlimited inequality is unfair. Seek fair limits to the range of inequality. The civil service, the military, and the university manage with a range of inequality of a factor of 15 or 20. Corporate America has a range of 500 or more. Many industrial nations are below 25... A sense of community necessary for democracy is hard to maintain across the vast differences current in the US. Rich and poor separated by a factor of 500 become almost different species (Daly 2009, 3, 4)

CHAPTER 5

A detailed example of dysfunction:

Escalation of wants for scarce natural capital

It is proposed here that triple dysfunction causes many economically developed democracies to have an irrational and damaging preoccupation with economic growth. This preoccupation may be viewed as the fixed idea that the monetary return given by a development project is a benefit. However, as explained here, this 'benefit' may really represent a cost, irrespective of whether there are other direct effects of the development such as environmental and social impacts. This cost may be incurred a few years after the completion of the development and if that happens then the bigger the financial return or ostensible benefit of the development, the bigger the ultimate net cost. The following description of how this occurs and why it is overlooked is based on a previously published article (P. Smith 2009). If this description appears to be an accurate description of economic development, then it is another indication that the triple dysfunction hypothesis has some reliability and could therefore be used to design a remedy for government failure. The description also illustrates the strategic and self-critical capacities of directorship that citizens must provide for their democracy.

The behaviour of democratic government described here appears to be sensed by many environmentalists, for many of them give development projects and economic growth a lower priority than others do. To people with less environmental concern, this priority may seem a selfish preoccupation with personal interests. A rationale that some of the more radical environmentalists give for their concern seems to confirm this assessment. It is that 'nature' has a right to exist without being altered by man, irrespective of whether its unaltered state is of value to man. To a less

committed observer this may seem like wishful thinking and this chapter offers another approach: evidence-based reasoning for a low priority for economic growth in developed economies.

The core behaviour of democratic government at issue here is that it gives citizens generally what they want and then has to give more and so on, apparently without end. This happens because, as explained below, when people get what they want, they then want more, a response that, it is suggested, is strongest for basic wants like food, shelter, energy and the education to get the employment that provides such essentials. For those who suspect this happens and have concerns about its environmental costs, this may raise a question: What is the ultimate point of giving citizens the things they want, especially those that are most essential to them, when they will then want even more? As economic growth is required to expand the supply of both essential and less essential goods and services, this question becomes; why have more economic growth when it largely recreates and may even exacerbate the dissatisfaction that demanded it? This chapter describes how triple dysfunction prevents democratic governments from recognizing and thinking about this question, so they remain mesmerized by the quest for more growth.

Background

Along with much public choice theory and the other indications of government failure discussed in Chapter 1, the triple dysfunction hypothesis implies there will be times when citizens would be justified in engaging in civil disobedience, if this is their last resort to try to block government actions on important issues. Government policy will sometimes be badly mistaken, not from inadequate information, nor from unpredictability of consequences and not from incompetence in politicians, but from irresponsibility towards public goods that is built into the political system. At times, citizens may perceive a moral obligation to challenge government in order to try to correct such mistakes. If only a small minority recognize such a case, they may see civil disobedience as the only way for them to try to alert the mass public in order to

raise political pressure to have that policy changed. Such disobedience could also be the only way they have to try to push their government to reform its processes so that its irresponsibility is eliminated. Civil disobedience occasionally erupts in democratic countries but has not developed the latter rationale, beyond the occasional call for revolution and more frequent calls for anti-corruption measures. No doubt this is because very few promising ways of systemically improving democratic government have been proposed and they have not received widespread publicity and understanding. Four proposals that approach this level of intervention are described in Chapter 6. Chapter 8 describes devices of more restricted capabilities that could assist in such reform.

A prominent example of civil disobedience occurred in 1982-83 in Australia when many hundreds of citizens made illegal attempts to physically block construction of the Tasmanian Gordon-below-Franklin hydro-electric project. A total of 1272 were arrested and nearly 450 remanded in gaol (Thompson 1984, 174). Before that protest and continuing to the time of writing, numerous demonstrations have been made in Australia against development projects such as the logging of old growth forests with high conservation values. Many citizens have been arrested in these events and some have been fined. In parallel with several other countries, such distress in citizens has inspired the establishment of a political party, the Australian Greens, to try to more effectively address not only the environment, but all public goods. These tactics of protest, civil disobedience and new political parties have produced some noteworthy gains for public goods, but it is suggested that because they do not address triple dysfunction, serious neglect of these goods continues and hostility smoulders between environmentalists and supporters of economic development. However, if the effect of triple dysfunction on the public goods of the environment and other natural resources is understood by all sides, then each should better understand the problem and constructive reform may become more likely.

Damage to natural resources from economic growth is apparent in the well advanced degradation of quality of life and future prospects for many regions, whether they are governed democratically or not. These problems are caused by overpopulation, or overdevelopment, or damaging technology or some mixture of

these. In some respects such as global warming, marine fisheries and whale stocks, the damage from economic growth is worldwide. Many nations, both democratic and non-democratic, have overexploited natural resources, so different types of political system appear unable to control their economic growth. The theory offered here only attempts to explain this failure in the case of liberal democracies: such failure by other regimes may have similar causes but is not investigated here.

The theory proposes that liberal democratic governments are likely to unjustifiably deplete natural resources because of their choices on the issue of whether to expand the economy. This issue has seven of the eight characteristics listed in Chapter 4 as presenting difficulties for decisions by democratic government.

Complexity

Expansion of the economy is likely to produce positive feedbacks that defeat the objectives of the expansion. This complexity is not seen by voters who are busy with their lives and not thinking deeply about public policy.

Abstraction

Future expansion of the economy and its consequences are merely ideas rather than concrete objects that voters can personally experience.

Obscurity

Important adverse consequences of economic growth develop imperceptibly. Those who are responsible for these consequences are difficult for citizens to recognize, because most of them are themselves.

Temporal remoteness of consequences

Adverse consequences are in the relatively distant future; beneficial ones are in the near future.

Pervasiveness

As almost all citizens support economic growth and thereby contribute to its consequences, avoiding these poses the massive problem of developing solidarity for unconventional public policy.

Competitiveness

Attempting to resolve the issue inflames conflict between those concerned primarily with private goods and those with strong concerns for public goods, such as the environment and equitable sharing of employment and wealth. This polarity is close to the hierarchist-egalitarian divergence in human populations that is partially genetic and has a large influence on human perception and action, as discussed in Chapter 4 and at the end of Chapter 7. As noted there, such worldviews resist modification.

Externalizability

The issue of whether to have more economic growth may be described as externalizable because it invites externalization of responsibility. It does this by posing the choice of how to match supply and want. It is tempting for voters to assume that this should be done by managing their supplies rather than their wants. If wants are to be managed, citizens may have to be very well informed, not only about the issues but about the readiness of fellow citizens to pay their share of the costs. From the perspective of democratic government, managing the wants of voters is an internalization of the way the match is made, whereas the matching is largely externalized from politics if it is done by manipulating supply.

The combination of these seven difficult characteristics within the issue of whether to have economic growth produces an almost 'perfect storm' of democratic failure. It is therefore chronic and widespread across states. It also has enormous impact. It is a failure of government that allows citizens to continue with accustomed ways of acting as individuals rather than as responsible members of their society, so they reproduce and consume according to private considerations with scant regard for public goods. For some people, as discussed below, consumption may mean

migrating to wherever they can do more of it. This continuation of egoistic behaviour amounts to collective irrationality if it persists when it has become destructive for the society in which it takes place. When democratic dysfunction allows such persistence we have a boom constructing a bust, as consuming and populating collides with the limits of natural resources. Global warming and peak oil indicate the scale of some of these problems. Moreover, the frustrations of such physical busts are preceded by those of collisions with the social limits of positional competition (Hirsch 1977).

Before describing the way this irrational preoccupation with economic growth is generated, three crucial concepts are described. These are: inflation of want by supply, the private goods bias and the supply bias.

Inflation of want by increase in supply

The first primary democratic dysfunction, confusion about who directs public policy, allows citizens to neglect their democratic role and follow narrow interests. This allows an apparently instinctive behaviour to assert itself without being disciplined by considerations of public goods: wants grow when their supplies are increased. This behaviour is postulated not as an invariable reflex, but as a general tendency and is referred to as 'inflation of want by increase in supply' (IWIS). As discussed later in this chapter under 'The scarcity multiplier', IWIS means that an increase in the supply of a good to an individual may increase the want of that individual for a greater supply, not only of that good but for many other goods as well. IWIS applies to both private and public goods that are wanted and supplied, but as discussed under 'The scarcity multiplier', it is often most pronounced with private goods.

IWIS is a ubiquitous tendency. It is also destructive, partly because the satisfaction of having wants met by an increase in supply is subsequently partially eliminated by wants being stimulated by that increase. This frustration often persists indefinitely through positive feedback, for when an increase in supply stimulates

more want, the larger want provokes more effort to find, or buy, or make bigger supplies; and if this succeeds, more want is evoked and so on. Frustration increases further when these expanding wants collide with the limits of natural resources. IWIS therefore obliges societies to exercise self-discipline. As Adam Smith (1976 [1790], 140) pointed out,

man, according to the Stoics, ought to regard himself, not as something separated and detached, but as a citizen of the world, a member of the vast commonwealth of nature... [and] to the interest of this great community, he ought at all times to be willing that his own little interest should be sacrificed.

IWIS is not only a positive feedback response by individuals, but also by populations. A community is likely to grow in response to an increase in the supply of something that its members want, either by more people being attracted to migrate into that community to take advantage of its increased supply, or by its birth rate being inflated by the increase in supply, or by its death rate being reduced by it, or by some combination of these responses. If the increased supply creates a bigger population it will also have created a bigger aggregate want for supplies of everything that people want. More effort will then go into expanding the supplies of all these goods and any success in this will encourage the population to grow further and so on.

The general example of IWIS is the propensity of all species to fully exploit their ecological niches. All replicating entities consume the food, shelter, sunlight and other things available to them that they need for replication, thereby enlarging their populations to the extent permitted by these supplies. If the limiting extent of such supplies is expanded by more supplies becoming available, the replicator's population invariably increases to the new limit established by this expansion of supply. The universality of such growth of consumption or want as a response to increase in supply suggests that it is a product of natural selection. Replicators that did not behave in this way would find their supplies taken over by those that did and would be more vulnerable to elimination by predators, especially those with IWIS behaviour.

In the case of humans, an apparent exception to the population growth form of IWIS is demographic transition, a failure of populations to respond in this way to growing supplies of goods and services. This 'failure' usually occurs as a human population progresses from a low state of economic development to a more prosperous state where most citizens are well educated, child mortality is reduced, contraceptives are available and acceptable, and food, housing, transport and other goods and services are relatively well supplied. However, the lack of population growth IWIS due to the demographic transition tends to be compensated for by enhanced IWIS in each individual, as increasing affluence encourages them to want more goods and services. Recent research indicates that this effect is usually supported by a reversal of demographic transition when a country develops beyond the human development index of 9, so that birth rates start to rise (Myrskylä 2009).

Organisms that show no evidence of consciousness, such as viruses, bacteria, plants and the simpler animals, cannot be described as displaying IWIS because it seems unlikely that they experience wants. But their behaviour is similar, so perhaps IWIS should be changed to 'inflation of consumption by increased supply' (ICIS), as the universal biological response. This behaviour, whether we call it IWIS or ICIS, is so pervasive that when we consider humans, we might anticipate that extremely competent social choice is required if societies are to have the capacity to resist it when this is prudent.

As noted above, IWIS in human societies may include inflation not only of the want that receives a greater supply, but inflation of wants for many other things as well. This gives IWIS considerable power in producing the political fixation on economic growth described below under 'The scarcity multiplier'. As explained there, the fixation develops because triple dysfunction means that democratic government directs IWIS to preferentially inflate wants for private rather than for public goods.

In economics, demand is want that is backed by purchasing power. As used here, 'want' refers to demand as well as to want for things that are not paid for, such as public goods available to all from nature and other public goods provided through government action on such things as fiscal, monetary and foreign policy. In what

follows, statements such as 'matching want and supply' should therefore be understood to include 'matching demand and supply'. Similarly, 'IWIS' includes inflation of demand by increased supply.

One form of IWIS has long been recognized by economists: "In the economics literature it is... well known that increased efficiency in the use of a resource leads over time to greater use of that resource and not less use of it" (Ekins, cited in UK Parliament 2006, 3). Increasing the efficiency of the use of a resource is equivalent to increasing its supply and the resultant 'greater use of that resource' registers a greater want for it, so we have IWIS. This effect was first noted by the nineteenth century economist Stanley Jevons as a response to increasing efficiency in the use of coal as an energy resource. In 1979-80, the 'Jevons' paradox' was stressed by economists Daniel Khazzoom and Leonard Brookes as a crucial consideration for energy management. American economist Harry Saunders (1992) subsequently called it the Khazzoom-Brookes (K-B) postulate. It is also known in the economics of energy use as the rebound effect (Herring and Sorrell 2009) and it may be expressed to cover resources in general by the statement that if technological improvement allows a resource to be used more efficiently, more of it will be wanted and consumed because it now costs less to use for that purpose. Two effects drive this increase in want or consumption: reduced cost of use makes the resource more attractive as a substitute for other resources; and the money that can now be saved in using this resource can be used to increase investment in production capacity and also to increase consumption, so economic growth is boosted, which raises the demand for that resource. This economic growth also raises the demand for other marketed goods and services, which is a part of the comprehensive boost to wants for both private and public goods that is hypothesized by IWIS. The rebound effect describes inflation of want for a resource via a particular type of expansion of its supply, which is not an increase in the quantity available for use, but an increase in the effectiveness of the use of the existing supply. Horace Herring and Steve Sorrell point out that for energy resources, rebound can be very significant but the ways in which it takes place are often not amenable to reliable measurement.

The rebound effect is only a part of the spectrum of inflation of want hypothesized by IWIS because the latter describes inflation of want for resources that may be public as well as private goods and which may be caused by an increase in the quantity of supply as well as an increase in the effectiveness of the use of the supply. Both these ways of increasing the effective supply may require new technology if they are to avoid raising its price. If the price rises, it could counter the increase in effective supply by diminishing its availability for use. Both IWIS (as a general effect) and rebound (as a particular case) predict that demands for, and consumption of, marketed goods and services will tend to rise in response to increasing the availability of supply, but IWIS goes further by saying this tendency also occurs with increases in the availability of supplies for wants that are not backed by purchasing power. So IWIS describes inflation of want for resources that are public goods as well as for those that are private goods. This makes IWIS quite different from Say's Law, the early nineteenth century idea that a supply creates an equal demand. Say's Law applies only to private goods, stating that the money paid for a supply immediately enables the supplier to exert a new demand of the same magnitude. IWIS also differs from Say's Law by describing the effect of an increase in supply, rather than the effect of a supply.

I now review the tendency for public goods to be underprovided by democratic governments and then describe how this combines with ignorance (one of the two secondary dysfunctions of triple dysfunction) of IWIS by these governments to produce an IWIS complex that persistently escalates the scarcity of natural resources.

Private goods bias

It was noted in Chapter 2 under 'The function of democratic government' that public and private goods usually compete with each other for the resources needed for their production and maintenance. An under provision of public goods will therefore usually signify a bias towards the provision of private goods. As triple dysfunction, in common with much observation and other theory, indicates that

democratic governments often under supply public goods we may conclude they have a bias to favour the provision of private goods - a 'private goods bias'. In the description given below in 'The scarcity multiplier', government failure is called a private goods bias instead of an under provision of public goods because it is a more direct way of understanding the tendency of government to excessively damage the provision of public goods by encouraging the production of private goods. In other words, their private goods bias tends to prevent democratic governments from controlling economic growth.

Democratic governments make some attempts to discourage wants for private goods and this has the effect of moderating their private goods bias. Examples are differential taxes such as excises and labelling laws aimed at specific goods or services. Such controls are usually introduced only after considerable pressure, either from special interests or from the public and after the development over time of the recognition by many citizens of good reasons for not satisfying some of their wants for private goods. However, as triple dysfunction makes democratic governments under provide public goods, their policies working against the private goods bias will be too few and too weak to eliminate it across all public policy.

Supply bias

A special form of the private goods bias is here termed the supply bias, a tendency of democratic governments to supply goods (whether private or public), rather than to ignore or try to discipline citizens' wants for these in situations where this supply will cause some public goods to be underprovided to an extent that outweighs the satisfactions of wants that the supply is intended to create. Supply bias is a type of private goods bias because it is a tendency for government to choose the private good of supplying the personal wants of citizens instead of choosing the public good of ignoring or disciplining these wants in the interests of broader public welfare. This bias, along with any other form of the private goods bias, reflects the strong tendency for politicians to follow the wishes of citizens, as noted in Chapter 2/

Ambiguous delegation/ 'Citizens as directors'. These wishes, as subsequently discussed in 'Ignorant directors', tend to focus on private rather than public goods.

Some observers, for example Hardin (1972), have identified the supply bias by remarking on a tendency of politicians and citizens to try to solve public issues with technical solutions that produce greater or more effective supplies, rather than by controlling wants, or as Hardin (1972, 251) expressed it, by "change in human values or ideas of morality". An example of supply bias is the reluctance of the Australian and US governments under Howard and G. W. Bush respectively, to respond to problems of global warming, peak oil and energy independence by trying to persuade their publics to want less energy. One way they might do this is to limit the size of their populations, through policies on birth rates and immigration. Instead, they have preferred to supply whatever energy is demanded, with technology that either reduces emissions (such as nuclear, wind and solar energy) or uses the existing supply more efficiently (for example by more effective insulation of buildings). However, both supply strategies are constrained by politicians' desires that the costs for citizens do not conflict strongly with citizens' wants for personal purchasing power.

Thus, for both private and public goods, democratic governments tend to match wants and supplies by managing supply more readily than want: they have a supply bias.

The scarcity multiplier

The following analysis indicates that democratic governments routinely make choices with a private goods bias (including a supply bias) thereby producing mounting problems of inflating want by increasing supplies (IWIS). These problems are largely those of economic growth pushing against the constraints of limited natural resources. As this is a self-reinforcing escalation of the scarcity of these resources, it is here labelled the 'scarcity multiplier'. The example described below illustrates the usual response of democracies to opportunities for a particular type of

economic growth. This is the macro-allocation of natural capital from the ecosystem for micro-allocation by the market, which is a subsystem of the ecosystem (Costanza and Daly 1992). 'Natural capital' refers to the stock of natural resources that provides a flow of useful natural goods or services, or 'natural income'. An example of natural capital on a grand scale is the sun, as it provides a flow of sunlight and also the 'flow' of gravity that keeps the earth in orbit and thereby sustains the flow of sunlight to earth. Macro-allocation of natural capital is the transfer of materials or energy from the ecosystem (which is the macro-system that holds stocks of material and energy that may be consumed without paying a price) to the market for micro-allocation, in which they are converted into goods and services for a price.

A crucial observation on the macro-allocation of natural capital to the market is that of ecological economists Robert Costanza and Herman Daly (1992, 41), who state that it "should be viewed as a social or collective decision rather than an individualistic market decision." This is because most natural capital comprises public goods, such as sunshine, climate, rivers, air, soils, mineral deposits, stocks of fish and wildlife, native vegetation, genetic diversity, wilderness and space on land, sea and in the air. The market is impotent in the allocation of public goods because they are freely available to all, so government or some other non-market institution must allocate them. This makes politics of fundamental importance for the rational macro-allocation of natural capital. When government malfunctions, this macro-allocation may fail and in democracies this often takes the form of a scarcity multiplier.

It is proposed that any region with the following conditions will suffer scarcity multiplication.

Conditions

1. The region has a resident population with an electorally representative liberal democratic government.
2. Migration to and from other regions is possible.
3. Economic conditions are well developed, so a basic level of affluence has been achieved: say over US\$15,000 per capita (Common and Stagl 2005, 199). This has

produced demographic transition, so the size of the population is controlled largely by the influence on migration of the economic opportunities in the region.

4. Other regions present higher and lower opportunities for earning income. These induce emigration and immigration for this region, which in combination with its birth and death rates may produce a tendency over time for its population to grow, shrink, or maintain its size.
5. The natural capital (both public and private) of the region is, with few exceptions such as air, limited. The availability of natural capital to residents is higher than that of many other regions.
6. Virtually all types of natural capital (both public and private) in the region are in some type of use to some extent, so there is a degree of competition between wants for these uses. Many of these wants may be expressed as political or economic demands.

An example of options presented by these conditions

These conditions exist in the Australian state of Tasmania, making escalation of the scarcity of its natural capital likely. An example is provided by a recent public dispute over whether to (a) dam the Meander River in northern Tasmania, primarily to produce private goods in the form of employment and income from agricultural irrigation and hydro-electricity; or (b) not dam the river, primarily to protect opportunities for the public to enjoy the mainly natural values of the area. These values were: the exceptional scenery of a forested mountain valley (which would be damaged by both the dam and its reservoir with a summer draw-down zone up to a kilometre wide), rare native quolls (carnivorous marsupials, approximately the shape and size of a domestic cat) and forms of appreciation based on natural seasonal river flows. The dispute arose because it appeared that projected economic returns from the dam might pay for its construction and operation, so option (a) became attractive to farmers in the region and to other Tasmanians favouring economic growth.

It must be noted that the private goods primarily produced by (a) would be taxed to finance consequent new public goods such as infrastructure and government

services. Moreover the production of these private and consequent public goods will tend to make the economy of the region grow, producing more private and public goods. The same effects will be produced to some degree by (b) if its primary protection of natural capital supports commercial activity such as tourism or the immigration of creative and entrepreneurial talent seeking an attractive environment to work and live in. As in (a), any such private goods produced by (b) will be taxed to finance consequent new public goods and all these activities help the economy grow. The possible consequences for each option may therefore be summarized without quantification as follows.

- (a) Dam → private goods → public goods (services, infrastructure) → more private and public goods (services, infrastructure)
- (b) Not dam → public natural capital protected → private goods → public goods (services, infrastructure) → more private and public goods (services, infrastructure).

The essential difference in possible outputs is that (a) does not protect public natural capital (PuNC) whereas (b) does. Politicians will react to these options with a private goods bias, including its supply bias variant. So if (a) seems to offer a greater or more certain supply of private goods than (b), then politicians will tend to favour (a) and ignore its damage to public natural capital. This will distress those citizens who are concerned with the public good of environmental quality, producing the following consequences.

Social choice from these options

1. Public dispute arises about whether to dam or protect the river and this signifies a degree of scarcity of private goods (water rights, electricity, employment and income) and also of PuNC public goods (scenery, quolls and free flowing rivers). A political decision is required on which scarcity is the greater cost to society and therefore warrants mitigation. This decision is made with the private goods bias, including its supply bias variant, giving a social choice of (a), to dam the Meander to convert PuNC public goods into a supply of private goods. This creates more employment and income in the region, which is central northern

Tasmania, an area of about 15,000 square kilometres supporting around 150,000 residents.

2. The increase in employment and income encourage this population to grow, by attracting migrants from other regions and by retaining residents who might otherwise migrate to other regions (see conditions 2, 3 and 4 above) for employment and income.
3. This expansion of the population increases aggregate want in the region for all the private and public goods that people want. This increases the wants to use the natural capital of the region to supply both public and private goods.
4. This natural capital is limited, so the increase in wants means its perceived scarcity rises above the level that provoked the social choice of the initial step 1. This rise in scarcity is further increased by the reduction in the quantity of PuNC that was created by social choice (a) at step 1.

This rise in scarcity of natural capital will tend to force more choices about what it is used for. The private goods bias with its supply variant means that it seems rational to politicians that they respond by converting more PuNC uses from supplying public goods to supplying private goods, so we have a tendency to repeat step 1. This creates a tendency to repeat step 2, the stimulation of population growth. Steps 3 and 4 follow feeding back to step 1 and so on. Each repetition of the cycle escalates the scarcity of the natural capital of this region, so it is called the scarcity multiplier.

Repetition of this loop may continue until economic opportunities are homogenised between this region and places outside it, for this should eliminate the incentives driving the migration effects of step 2. Before this happens, the remnant relatively high per capita availability of natural capital also attracts people looking for the lifestyle this provides. As the Department of Economic Development in Tasmania (Tasmania 2007) boasts: “More and more people are flocking to Tasmania because we offer a lifestyle that has almost disappeared from the modern world.” The Department appears determined to ignore the awkward fact that the “flocking” will erase the lifestyle. As growing scarcities of natural capital in Tasmania, or in its

central north, or in any other region with the conditions specified above, reduce both economic and lifestyle attractions, the migration effects producing growth of population will diminish and the loop will break when depletion here equals that elsewhere.

The scarcity multiplier is a positive feedback because the initial input, an allocation of natural capital from public to private uses, is repeated to some degree by each cycle. This loop is an IWIS – an inflation of want by increasing supply feedback - that works by increasing the size of the population. It is strengthened when the step 1 conversion of PuNC to private goods aids another type of step 2 that is parallel to the population growth step 2 and continually operates in market economies regardless of whether they are affected by choices between (a) and (b), as in step 1. This second step 2 is a continuing tendency of aspirations for per capita consumption of private goods to increase and is called 'affluenza step 2', after the description of 'affluenza' as "unfulfilled feeling that results from efforts to keep up with the Joneses" (Hamilton and Denniss 2005, 3). As discussed below, affluenza escalates aspirations for private goods from whatever the current level is, so when this is raised as is done by step 1, affluenza works on it to escalate aspirations at a higher level. As noted above, this boost to wants adds to the aggregate increase of want in step 3 by doing it for private goods only. The population growth step 2 has a broader push on the want increase in step 3, for it directly increases wants for PuNC and all other public goods as well as increasing wants for private goods, including those which are natural capital such as private land. So the two types of step 2 work together to push wants in step 3 and thus the whole cycle. As natural capital is limited, this escalation of wants increases its scarcity, which converts its uses from public to private, free to marketed and low priced to high priced. It should be noted that the affluenza IWIS differs from population growth IWIS in that it inflates aggregate want by increasing the wants of each individual, whereas the latter inflates aggregate want by increasing the number of individuals.

The affluenza drive of the multiplier is persistent and it may be strong. It arises in the status rivalry and adaptation described in Chapter 2/ Ambiguous delegation/ Ignorant directors/ 'Relatively dynamic causes of citizen ignorance of public goods'.

As noted there, both status rivalry and adaptation escalate the level of want for goods and do it more for private than for public goods. This escalation of wants increases efforts to supply them and increases in supplies of private goods enable status rivalry and adaptation to further increase wants, so both responses produce their own IWIS positive feedbacks. In addition, both status rivalry and adaptation are intensified by advertising, which as noted in Chapter 2/ Ambiguous delegation/ 'Ignorant directors'/ 'Relatively dynamic...', may also maintain itself as a positive feedback that strengthens if it increases sales revenue. This is another IWIS, for when advertising raises sales revenue, this increased supply of funds inflates advertisers' wants for more sales revenue and they increase their advertising. Affluenza is thus a compound feedback of three IWIS cycles, one of which boosts the other two and may get stronger over time. The private goods bias further assists the multiplier by preventing government from controlling affluenza, so that the culture progressively becomes more strongly focused on converting natural capital into consumer goods. Stocks are increasingly run down to boost throughput. The private goods bias is therefore a democratic dysfunction that not only produces defective political choices at step 1, but develops a culture in which citizens want unsustainable growth.

The scarcity multiplier thereby makes communities burden themselves with the economic and intangible costs of rising scarcities of natural capital. It operates as a self-propagating, expanding sequence of large and small developments driven by separate social choices that appear rational to voters and their political agents because the electoral system presents them with incentives to favour private over public goods.

A possible moderation of the multiplier

A block to the multiplier may be anticipated to be raised as it progresses, by each step 1 diminishing the quantity of PuNC that remains, making its value greater, as this is perceived by citizens, so they give more emphasis to protecting its remnants. In the case of rivers, as more of them get dammed, those citizens who become

concerned about this will place a higher value on the remaining natural rivers. This means that the step 1 social choice of the multiplier will tend to shift from choice (a) to choice (b). However such a shift will not take place until the private goods bias of the political process has cycled the multiplier to produce some under provision of this PuNC.

However, as particular types of PuNC become under provided in this manner, the exploitation that does this shifts away from these PuNC as perceptions of their public values rise, to other PuNC that have not yet gone through this process. This substitution of less scarce PuNC for more scarce types tends to stop the rising scarcity of any particular PuNC from shifting the social choice at step 1 from (a) to (b), so the under provision spreads widely across different types of PuNC. In the example of hydro-electricity and irrigation from free flowing rivers, as such rivers become rare, the satisfaction of rising wants for energy and water will tend to shift from damming more rivers to using PuNC that is perceived as less scarce, which might be windy sites for wind turbines and urban waste water for treatment or, as is being done in the larger Australian cities, desalinizing sea water. The result is that the scarcity of PuNC as a whole continues to escalate and the costs of using PuNC increase as less economically attractive PuNC are substituted for PuNC resources that are becoming scarcer. Such substitutions often raise the scarcity of PuNC by creating new environmental costs, for example wind farms may damage scenery and kill native birds, which is happening in Tasmania with the endangered wedge-tailed eagle. Such rising costs of growth, both monetary and environmental, tend to be overlooked by citizens focused on the here and now of the private goods of employment and disposable income, so politicians pursue growth in order to provide more private goods without fully considering whether the associated erosion of public goods is compensated for by benefits that will be sustained.

The private goods bias may push under provision of PuNC to extremes

As discussed in Chapter 2, the basic themes of government policy in liberal democracies are driven mainly by public opinion, but most citizens are disengaged from thinking very much about public goods, especially PuNC, so the minority of public opinion that does think about these tends to be ignored by government. This produces scarcities of PuNC that will increase until they become so obvious and serious that the attention and concern of the usually disengaged majority may be aroused to the extent that they also demand that PuNC must not be allowed to become any scarcer, even if their private goods (such as employment and income for employees; and profits for employers, some of which may be generated with the help of immigrant labour) have to be restricted in order to achieve this. However it is difficult to see this happening, partly because the disengagement of the average voter prevents her from realizing that the rising scarcities she experiences are caused by people wanting too many private goods, and also that this effect arises from too many people as well as from too much want by each of them. In addition, the business lobby that wants cheap labour and large populations of consumers has the financial capacity to manipulate both public opinion and politicians towards the production of more private goods as discussed in Chapter 2/ Excessive competition/ 'Competition between politicians'. The private goods bias therefore appears to be a democratic behaviour that should, sooner or later, produce great deprivation of many public goods and the private goods derived from them, unless democracies can be modified to reduce or eliminate it.

Another possible driver of the scarcity multiplier

The scarcity multiplier is described above as driven partly by the private goods bias at step 1 and partly by an indefinite escalation of wants for private goods via affluenza step 2. However, the multiplier may be strengthened by another escalation of wants for private goods, one that could arise from growth of population at step 2.

It might be anticipated that a population growth step 2 will not affect the social choice of step 1 in the consequent cycle of the multiplier because a bigger population has a proportionally bigger aggregate want for both public and private goods. However, if growth of population adds more, or less, to wants for private goods than for public goods then this growth will tend to reinforce, or counter respectively, the effect of the private goods bias in the social choice at step 1. What will actually happen depends on circumstances but one that seems likely would reinforce the multiplier by adding more citizen want for private goods than for public goods into the choice between (a) and (b) at step 1. As much of the growth of population will come from immigration, the desires of migrants will affect the ratio of private/ public goods wants that politicians express in their policies. The newcomers will often be from less affluent places, many of which are heavily populated and therefore have a relative per capita scarcity of natural capital, which may have cultivated a strong focus on earning a living. Immigrants may therefore have a higher want for private goods than the population they are joining. Another source of this attitude may be that such immigrants have had relatively limited opportunities - such as access to high quality environments, to leisure time, to education and to income - to learn how to use natural capital to enhance their quality of life. They would not be accustomed to living or holidaying in spacious rural or natural situations that enable them to cultivate pursuits such as fishing, hunting, horse-riding, all-terrain vehicle use, observing wildlife, surfing, diving, skiing, wilderness backpacking, kayaking and river rafting. Such effects of immigration at step 2 would strengthen the cultural drift noted above as being produced by affluenza, towards greater wants for private goods.

Human adaptation to loss also drives the scarcity multiplier

The distress of citizens at losses of PuNC due to the scarcity multiplier will fade as time and generations pass, leaving them with lower expectations or wants for these goods. As Frans de Waal (1996, 201) observes, humans are “born adaptation

artists.” Layard (2005, 229) notes that if “things get better, we after a while take them for granted. If they get worse, we also eventually largely accept them”. Adaptation to loss occurs not only within the individual, but between generations, for when a new one grows up in a situation that the older generation recognizes as degraded because of the earlier experiences of its members, the new generation will consider it normal. These young people have known nothing better so they unconsciously tolerate the situation - no doubt employing instinctive coping responses, as indicated below by de Waal’s observation in ‘Costs and benefits of the multiplier’.

This intergenerational adaptation to loss differs from the adaptation to gain described above for affluenza and it takes much longer. With affluenza, a gain in the supply of private goods is fairly quickly adapted to by the individual, so that after a few months or years, the gain has produced a level of supply that the individual now feels she really requires. The human adaptation to loss that helps drive the scarcity multiplier is a mixture of adaptation to diminishing availability of natural capital within the life of the individual and lack of awareness by new generations. Both types of accommodation occur with natural capital whether it is PuNC or privately owned (PrNC), such as freehold land. Although humans are more sensitive to loss than to gains, feelings of loss fade with time (Layard 2005, 141-42, 167-68, 229). So the individual’s sense of loss of PuNC will diminish with the passage of time and from one generation to the next, sense of loss will disappear completely as the total experience of the next generation to a lower supply of PuNC conditions its members to have lower expectations for its supply. So both intragenerational and intergenerational adaptations to loss are likely to support the private goods bias for the choice of (a) in step 1 of the scarcity multiplier, assisting it to convert PuNC into private goods. Adaptation to loss shifts the culture from having strong interests in the natural environment towards a greater focus on people and the things they make and do. This raises questions. Is a culture adapted to crowding healthier, more fulfilling and more sustainable than one that is not?

It seems likely that perceptions of increased value of PuNC induced by its escalating scarcity will be overwhelmed by affluenza, by cultural shift created by immigration and by intra- and intergenerational adaptation to loss, leaving the

scarcity multiplier free to eliminate PuNC wherever this can be made to expand the production of private goods. The scarcity of private natural capital (PrNC) will escalate through a similar process, but possibly more quickly because its state of private ownership may prevent the public from feeling the distress it initially feels as it suffers losses in its common property.

The influence of each IWIS system and their control

Either population growth IWIS, or affluenza IWIS, may be enough on its own to drive a damaging scarcity multiplier. If affluenza IWIS can be suspended, immigration from other regions with fewer PuNC exploitation opportunities may continue to drive population growth step 2 as long as such a difference between this region and any others lasts. A relatively high preference for private goods by immigrants may assist the private goods bias to drive the multiplier through its step 1 conversion of PuNC to private goods. Immigration may thus overcrowd this region to the extent of overcrowding elsewhere on the planet, so the multiplier could eventually produce a very high scarcity of natural resources through population growth IWIS alone. If this is prevented by government restriction of immigration but the affluenza IWIS is permitted to operate, this may also drive the multiplier to high levels of scarcity of both PuNC and PrNC. Scarcity of PuNC would produce low per capita availability of PuNC and scarcity of PrNC would produce high prices for PrNC. If both affluenza and population growth IWIS operate simultaneously, their growths of want and scarcity are multiplied together, for one increases the want of each individual while the other increases the number of individuals.

Affluenza may be countered by devices that encourage people to minimize their status rivalry and adaptation. These devices should focus on public goods as well as on private goods. The latter type should encourage people not to want more, or as Hamilton and Denniss (2005, 34-35) put it, to “want what I have” rather than to “have what I want”. One such device would be regulation that restricts advertising. The public goods focus may combat affluenza by helping citizens with collective

choice, so that their choices of public goods are easier, clearer, better informed and therefore more able to compete against the choices of private goods that they could make instead. Such facilitation of collective choice appears to require a public forum that assists citizens to deliberate and select strategic public goods such as controls on advertising and goals on population size. A proposal for this type of institution is given in Part 2.

Other economic projects as triggers for the scarcity multiplier

A region with conditions conducive to the scarcity multiplier can have this feedback triggered or boosted by any type of economic growth, not only by the diversion of PuNC into commercial uses as described above for the Meander River. Consider a new value-adding project in a region, such as a pulp mill which would use public forest that is already commercially used in that place for woodchip exports. If this new project was environmentally benign, it would appear to be an unmitigated benefit for the region as it would produce more economic benefit from PuNC (public forest) that is already used for private goods (woodchips and employment). However the increase in employment and income from this new project would fuel both types of step 2, generating scarcity multiplication.

At the time of writing, the construction of such a pulp mill is imminent in Tasmania. The largest woodchip exporter in the southern hemisphere, Gunns Ltd., has obtained State government approval for a Aus\$2 billion pulp mill that would be the biggest private project undertaken in the state. This proposal has created intense public dispute over potential environmental impact, but these arguments have not considered the scarcity multiplication that the development would produce. Unless this is done it appears likely that sooner or later the proposal will be modified to ameliorate its direct environmental impacts and it will follow the pattern of that discussed above for the dam on the Meander River. This received government approval and water flowed over the spillway in September 2008.

Costs and benefits of the multiplier

Two major costs of the scarcity multiplier are that it makes development projects reproduce problems of employment and income similar to and possibly bigger than, those they were intended to solve and at the same time it increases the scarcity of natural capital. These costs amount to frustration of wants for both private and public goods and may subsequently change the culture as successive generations cope with increasing scarcity.

The multiplier makes natural capital scarcer by converting PuNC into private goods and also by increasing the number of people using the diminishing natural capital. Although this produces other public goods by generating tax revenue, these goods must serve more citizens and will be limited by the private goods bias in government decisions on tax rates. Also, the extra public goods provided in this way cannot substitute for some of the types of PuNC that are lost; moreover, these extra goods usually require additional work by citizens, in contrast with the free services from the PuNC that was eliminated to finance them. The resulting frustrations appear likely to doom the aspirations of citizens for a high quality of life. The rise of environmental disputes over the last half century indicates that this regression has now become a very real problem. Over the decades ahead it is possible that its inexorable escalation will increasingly frustrate those with a social conscience so fewer may attempt to resist it.

The multiplier also produces a third set of costs by encouraging inequality of wealth in society. This was described at the end of Chapter 4 as exacerbating many physical and mental health problems. The multiplier cultivates these problems with its affluenza IWIS. As people aspire to consume more, some have the ability or position to gain advantage over others. As Wilkinson and Pickett (2009, 51, 192) observe:

Inequality is a powerful social divider... Our position in the social hierarchy affects who we see as part of the in-group and who as out-group – us and them – so affecting our

ability to identify with and empathize with other people... The search for a mechanism [that causes inequality to damage health] led to the discovery that social relationships (as measured by social cohesion, trust, involvement in community life and low levels of violence) are better in more equal societies.

These researchers conclude that the major cause of the relative success of more equal societies is that people relate to each other in a more supportive way (Wilkinson and Pickett 2009, 192-3).

Against these three ways in which the multiplier is costly, a possible benefit is that it helps more people to live in the region in which it operates. However, sooner or later this is at the cost of rising scarcity of natural capital, which creates an increasingly commercialized, narrow and expensive lifestyle. This combination of having more people while each has a higher cost of living and lower quality of life is very hazardous, for increasing the population at the risk of the happiness of each individual may result in a sudden and severe reversal from a situation of moderately positive aggregate value where the average individual generally feels somewhat satisfied, to one of negative total value in which there are more individuals, most of whom feel more or less stressed from crowding effects. In this connection, it is interesting to note de Waal's (1996, 200-201) assessment that

coping with stress is not the same as getting rid of it; constant behavioural (and probably also physiological) countermeasures are necessary under crowded conditions. All of these techniques are part of the impressive adaptive potential of the primate order... Human populations with long crowding histories, such as the Japanese, the Javanese and the Dutch, each in their own way emphasize tolerance, conformity and consensus, whereas populations spread out over lands with empty horizons may be more individualistic, stressing privacy and freedom instead... Adjusting the definition of right and wrong is one of the most powerful tools at the disposal of *Homo sapiens*, a species of born adaptation artists.

Many years ago, zoologist Desmond Morris (1967, 177) asserted that we

already know that if our populations go on increasing at their present terrifying rate, uncontrollable aggressiveness will become dramatically increased. This has been proved conclusively with laboratory experiments. Gross overcrowding will produce social stresses and tensions that will shatter our community organizations long before it starves us to death.

The results of laboratory experiments may not translate well to human society, but if “gross overcrowding” progresses at a “terrifying rate”, the “behavioural countermeasures” of “born adaptation artists” may be overwhelmed. This type of failure seems to be frequently depicted in film and literature, such as Shane Meadows’ 2007 movie *This Is England* and J. G. Ballard’s 2006 novel *Kingdom Come*. Such works focus on social dysfunction that appears to be caused by poor quality of life. Prudence dictates that we allow ourselves either plenty of ‘lebensraum’, or several generations to adapt to crowding. The former appears far less risky and much more pleasant.

Implications of the multiplier

The scarcity multiplier is one form of the tertiary democratic dysfunction of under provision of public goods. It has the capacity to transform economic benefits into costs so that the greater the benefit the bigger the cost it produces. This effect could make cost-benefit analyses (CBA) of development projects totally misleading. To avoid this, CBA must be based on competent political decisions on preferred limits to the IWIS feedbacks that drive the multiplier - those of population, status rivalry, adaptation and sales promotion. The primary democratic dysfunctions that foster the multiplier indicate that such political decisions require competent strategic directorship by the people; so deliberative participatory institutions are required to provide them with the incentive and assistance they need to perform in this way.

To choose their preferred limits for population, citizens need information about the costs and benefits of high and low ratios of population to natural capital.

Research and public debate on this is neglected. Indeed, as noted under 'Size of population' in Chapter 4, scholars note that a striking aversion to discussing human carrying capacity has developed over the last few decades, following initial widespread public debate on the problem that was largely initiated in 1968 by Paul Erhlich's *The Population Bomb*. This state of denial frustrates attempts to develop sustainability and appears to be a learned response to the inability of democracies to rationally deliberate population size, as discussed in Chapter 4. The quality of life that we sustain depends not only on the quantity and quality of natural capital, but on limits to both the size of the population using it and the wants of each individual.

IWIS is offered as a better understanding of the response to supply than the conventional one, which is that increasing a supply will satisfy wants. The latter view justifies the supplying of goods and services that are wanted and the IWIS concept does not dispute its accuracy but takes a slightly longer term view by asking: 'and what is the effect of this satisfaction?' The answer is often the opposite to conventional understanding, as explained above by descriptions of IWIS systems and their combination to form the scarcity multiplier IWIS. The concept of IWIS should replace the current concept of the response to supply because, by taking a longer view, it takes more evidence into account. For example the history of economic growth in developed economies over the last half century has shown that despite doubling and tripling of real incomes, the percentage of citizens reporting themselves as 'very happy' has hardly altered and in the US and the UK, has declined (Jackson 2009, 40). A survey of 61 countries has shown that above an average annual income of US\$15,000, life-satisfaction hardly responds to increases in income (Jackson 2009, 40-2). As noted in Chapter 2/ Ambiguous delegation/ Ignorant directors/ Relatively dynamic.../ 'Distraction by adaptation', the level of income that citizens regard as what they require closely follows real increases in their income.

The prediction of the scarcity multiplier is an analysis in ecological economics because this discipline recognizes that decisions on macro-allocating natural capital from the ecological system to the economic subsystem must be done by government (Costanza and Daly 1992, 41). It cannot be done by the market as this depends on market prices for its decisions, which restrict them to marketed or excluded goods,

that is, to private goods. As public natural capital is a public good it has no market price, so some non-market institution such as government is required to attempt rational choices on whether to macro-allocate it to the economic subsystem. The description of the scarcity multiplier is significant for ecological economics not only as a prediction, but also because it re-emphasizes that ecological economics must be based on political science. As choices indicated by ecological economics depend on competent choices by governments, ecological economics should be regarded as a research program of political science. It is governments who decide, or neglect to decide, whether to macro-allocate public natural capital from the ecosystem to the economic subsystem.

The scarcity multiplier describes democracies as having a long term tendency to destroy their citizens' quality of life. Eventually this may stress citizens so much that they abandon concerns for equality and dispense with democracy. There is strong evidence from studies of per capita income and political stability that "poor democracies are fragile, exceedingly so when per capita incomes fall below US\$2000 (in 1975 dollars). When per capita incomes fall below this threshold, democracies have a one in ten chance of collapsing within a year" (Shapiro 2005, 192).

The pervasiveness of IWIS indicates that governments must be aware that if they increase a supply, they must not allow it to destroy satisfaction by escalating wants. This awareness is essential if governments are to achieve sustainable development but it is counter intuitive. As noted above, it involves not only thinking 'if we do this we will be better off' and then relaxing, but it requires a little more thinking: 'and what will happen when we are better off?' As Richard Dawkins (2001) has observed: "Sustainability does not come naturally", so governments must be very competent if they are to face and control the scarcity multiplier.

Conclusions for Part 1

The examples described in this and the preceding chapter appear to show the triple dysfunction prediction of democratic failure being realised. This encourages

triple dysfunction to be used as a theory that indicates specific types of reforms for government. It is therefore applied in Part 2 to guide the design of a new institution that may enable liberal democratic governments to improve their provisions of public goods. This institution is a new public forum intended to provide the citizens of any liberal democracy with the incentive and assistance they need to collectively provide a directorship that can address strategic public goods. For example, this new forum may enable democracies to effectively deliberate global warming, unemployment, population size, status rivalry, adaptation, sales promotion and the necessary ingredients of a high quality of life. It may thereby enable democracies to recognize and control their private goods bias, including its supply variant, in order to prevent inflation of want by supply.

Part 2

Prescribing a remedy

CHAPTER 6

The People's Forum:

A deliberative aid for liberal democracies

The triple dysfunction hypothesis views the electoral systems of liberal democratic governments as a major problem, suggesting three possible remedies: (a) countering the deleterious effects of these systems, (b) altering them so that they produce better effects, or (c) eliminating them. The last option may take the form of using a non-electoral method of selecting representatives, or eliminating representation by attempting direct democracy, or abandoning democracy itself. A new institution designed to implement option (a) is now proposed because it appears more feasible to implement in current political contexts than either (b) or (c). If (a) works it should improve the political capacity to implement either (b) or (c) as well as increasing the competence of the polity to decide whether it is prudent to do these things.

This new design is called the People's Forum. In this chapter it is broadly described and then evaluated in two ways: it is compared with principles that have been theorized as required for deliberative participation in democratic government and it is compared with three institutional designs of similar scale of operation and purpose that have been suggested for the improvement of democratic governance. Chapter 7 specifies additional details of the Forum's structure and uses these to explain more fully why it should function as intended.

Triple dysfunction indicates that if the Forum is to improve government, it should do three things: make it clear that it is the people who direct government policy; reduce competition between politicians so that it is more constructive; and reduce the compromising of relatively informed and considered public opinion by less well

developed public opinion. The Forum is designed to achieve the first of these objectives by being a very visible public institution that encourages and helps the people to exercise responsible directorship. As discussed below, participation in the People's Forum is voluntary, so only some citizens will actively engage with it. For their contributions to be credible to all citizens, the participants must be seen to be deliberating strategic policy issues from all points of view and thereby developing responsible decisions on these. Any development of this credibility would start to apply pressure on politicians to implement these decisions, so that the participants together with the mass public are then functioning as directors of government. The second objective is to be pursued by the Forum helping the people to moderate both the degree of competition between politicians and the extent to which it may damage policy. The third objective is pursued by the Forum being designed to facilitate the development of mass public opinion and also to give more political influence to that section of this opinion that is more likely to be well developed. These three objectives may be condensed into two, by omitting the specifications of citizens being directors and how they should do this. This gives us a mission for the Forum of (1) improving public policy and (2) ensuring that this improved policy is seen as legitimate by the people.

The first and third design objectives given above are substantially those of deliberative democracy, so the People's Forum may be classed as a deliberative design. This requires a broader interpretation of democratic deliberation than the "public deliberation" defined by Michael X. Delli Carpini and colleagues (2004, 319) as discourse with other citizens that helps them "reach judgements about matters of public concern". This discourse includes talk, discussion and debate in formal or informal settings, via any medium including face-to-face exchanges, telephone conversations, email and internet forums. The meaning of democratic deliberation as used to describe the People's Forum is broader than this as it includes "self-deliberation" (Delli Carpini 2004, 318-19), the thinking and learning of citizens that may be stimulated by their observations of the views of others and of information and events relevant to public issues. Delli Carpini and his colleagues exclude self-deliberation about public affairs from public deliberation because it does not involve

personal reciprocal exchange, but I include it as part of democratic deliberation because it is an integral part of how people recognize and consider issues. As Robert Goodin (2003, 54-5) argues,

it remains significant how very much of the work of deliberation, even in external-collective settings, must inevitably be done within each individual's head... The challenge facing deliberative democrats is thus to find some way of adapting their deliberative ideals to any remotely large-scale society, where it is simply infeasible to arrange face-to-face discussions across the entire community.

James Bohman (1998, 401) has defined deliberative democracy as "any one of a family of views according to which the public deliberation of free and equal citizens is the core of legitimate political decision making and self-government". Michael Saward (2001, 365) offers a similar view. "That deliberative democracy comes in many shapes is an understatement... However, a simple dichotomy between circumscribed and uncircumscribed variants of deliberative sites and forums captures with reasonable accuracy the institutional aspirations of various strands of deliberative theory." Saward defines the circumscribed extreme as a consciously designed forum with a limited number of participants, who engage face-to-face with a limited agenda of issues and use tight procedures for discussion. The uncircumscribed extreme is a spontaneous group or network of an indeterminate number of people who may never meet but engage for an indefinite time with informal procedures on a self-generated, fluid set of issues. As will be seen from the following description, the People's Forum is circumscribed in several ways as it has many specific features such as a regular schedule for voting on a carefully composed set of questions: but it is also uncircumscribed in such ways as a degree of adaptability of the agenda, an indeterminate number of participants and no organised group discussions.

The mission, strategies and shape of the People's Forum

As noted above, the mission of the People's Forum is to improve the quality of public policy and to produce strong legitimacy for this policy in the eyes of citizens, so that the government implements it. While the triple dysfunction hypothesis points to these two goals as being the required mission, it also indicates three major strategies that the Forum should employ to accomplish this. The first primary dysfunction – confusion about who directs government – indicates that one strategy is to make it clear to all that the people are the directors. The third primary dysfunction – compromise of informed public opinion by ignorance – indicates a second strategy of ensuring that these directors are well informed. Moreover, their knowledge must be focused on fundamental or strategic policy as the function of any director is to lay good policy foundations, so that the whole spectrum of issues from short to long term can be addressed effectively. A third strategy is also indicated by the third primary dysfunction: a strategy of producing political influence for the part of public opinion that is likely to be the best developed. This is backed by the well recognized limitation discussed in Chapter 2 that many people lack the time, facilities and in many cases either the interest or the ability to become well informed on public goods.

In a democracy, the second strategy of getting citizens well informed about strategic issues prepares them for directing government, so this strategy may be taken as also expressing the first one. The three strategies are thereby condensed into two and so, for the People's Forum we have:

The mission-

- improving the quality of public policy
- developing legitimacy for this public policy.

Strategies for achieving the mission -

- accelerating the development of public opinion on strategic issues

- producing political influence for the part of this public opinion that is likely to be relatively well developed.

The two strategies would not only reduce confusion about who directs government and minimize excessive compromise of informed public opinion, but also ameliorate the second part of triple dysfunction - excessive competition among politicians. By explicitly making the development of strategic policy the role of the people, politicians would be confined to a smaller and subordinate area of policy, so any neglect of public goods caused by competition between them becomes less significant: there would be fewer policies for politicians to neglect and those that they neglect would be less systemically important. Clarifying the role of the people as directors may also reduce competition between politicians by preventing them from vying with each other for directorship and also by assisting the people to introduce regulations, laws or changes to the constitution that would moderate this competition.

To execute its two strategies, the People's Forum employs a repetitive, non-binding referendum or poll with an agenda that is largely supervised by the public. These features, together with others described below, are intended to stimulate and facilitate an unhurried and in some respects, organized and careful consideration of strategic issues by citizens. As currently practiced, referendums cannot do this well, if at all, because they usually combine most or all of four features: a proposition is put to the vote as a binary choice; it is only voted on once; the result binds the legislature to enact that choice; and propositions are chosen by elites. This gives referendums the image of all-or-nothing contests that cannot afford the reflection of deliberation. Simone Chambers (2001, 231-2) describes this as happening in three ways: the framing of the question is not negotiable; the vote is irreversible; and a majoritarian situation is presented in which citizens' willingness to deliberate is displaced by their need to win. This discouragement of deliberation is also abetted by the news media "adopting election coverage rules as the standard of news presentation for referendums" (Jenkins and Mendelsohn 2001, 229).

The question of whether heuristics can substitute for deliberation to assist citizens to vote on issues according to their existing interests is of limited significance for the People's Forum because its major strategy is to accelerate the development of public opinion. Deliberation is necessary not only for this, but for constructive popular control of the agenda and also to stimulate demands for new information that may be needed for both the elites who provide cues for citizens and for citizens themselves, if either group is to be knowledgeable and competent on the strategic issues presented by the Forum. As the purpose and design of the People's Forum poll or referendum is quite distinctive, it may be useful to recognize it as a new type that does not fit within the current broad classes of *decision-controlling* and *decision-promoting* referendums (Setälä and Schiller 2009, 5). *Opinion development referendum* (or poll) is suggested as a name for this new class.

To establish itself as a part of the system of government, the Forum's poll must become a widely recognized event that attracts significant levels of public interest, public involvement and public status. The development of public status would indicate that the Forum was starting to execute its second strategy. For the execution of both strategies, the technology that is employed is important (Lupia and Sin, 2003), but the essential feature is the way the poll is organized (Flanagin et al 2006, 32-33). This means that the Forum might work to a useful degree with technology no more advanced than postal mail for voting, together with print media to introduce the ballot paper, to facilitate much of the public discourse on the issues presented and to publish the voting results. However, modern communication technology makes it much easier to introduce and run this institution.

The focus of the Forum

The People's Forum is not intended to do work that is suitable for small panels of perhaps ten or twenty citizens. Such groups may convene as one group or they may operate as several that meet in plenary sessions and thereby involve hundreds of members. They may meet face-to-face or online. A citizen panel or a coordinated set

of these can only be a very small sample of the population of a state or nation, because most of the participants must be able listen to each other. Where the legitimacy (to all members of a polity) of the decisions of such panels arises from the opportunities for participation that they offer to all members of the polity, then these panels will tend to restrict themselves to issues that can be managed by small communities, for it is only the members of these that will have significant opportunities to participate. Where this legitimacy is important for the implementation of decisions, these panels must focus on issues that small communities might successfully address.

As the Forum is primarily designed to address issues that only very large communities have a prospect of managing, it offers participation to unlimited numbers of citizens. To create the prospect that their participation may be powerful it concentrates on issues of fundamental or strategic significance. This focuses the collective development of citizens' ideas for public policy on issues of regional, national or wider concern and with long term implications. The Forum is thereby designed to help citizens direct government to prevent and rectify causes of problems, rather than treat symptoms. To help with this systemic, strategic approach it must assist citizens to question their basic assumptions and attitudes, when this may be useful. But this approach can influence government policy only if the resultant changes in attitudes are widespread through the polity. To be seen as legitimate by all or most citizens, such changes via the Forum should occur in full view of all who care to take an interest and any citizen must be able, if they wish, to contribute to the maintenance or reform of these attitudes. The type of issue the Forum is designed to deal with can thus be described as fundamental and long-running. As an example, the issue of whether to have a presidential political system would be suitable for the Forum, but the issue of who is to be the next president would not be. 'Long-running' is specified for the Forum not only because strategic issues have long-lasting effects, but also because, as noted below, the institution would function by addressing the same issues for many years, so the issue itself must be one that remains relevant for such periods. Even after an issue is politically decided and acted on, the Forum may continue to address it if there is reason to

believe that citizens want, or should want (in the opinion of the Forum's managers, as discussed below), to keep their choice under review.

The Forum's focus on fundamental, long-running issues is necessary for it to clarify democratic directorship and thereby correct the first primary democratic dysfunction. It is only by determining strategic policy that popular rule can provide effective directorship for a polity and thereby make it a really functional democracy. If popular rule does not consciously and deliberately do this (which Chapter 2 describes as largely the current situation) then either the polity will drift somewhat aimlessly in terms of fundamental goals, or some other influence will take charge and direct the polity at this level. Such undemocratic direction will, of course, largely control the polity at the other policy levels as well.

The poll structure

Each voting event of a People's Forum that is conducted for a particular society or group of societies would usually be repeated at regular intervals of sufficient length to allow some possibility of development in public opinion. In contrast with continual polling, such distinct separation of polls also makes it possible for all those who are concerned to express themselves at the same time, which potentially makes the result for each poll a set of preferences that amounts to a democratic social choice. An established People's Forum might therefore conduct its voting events at the same time each year. This periodicity should also prevent citizens becoming fatigued with too much voting. However, in the start-up phase of a People's Forum, the poll might initially be held quarterly or half-yearly a few times to stimulate public interest. As noted in the previous section, this poll is repetitive, so it would endeavour to ask the same sets of questions on the same issues each time it is held. These issues, the questions, and the menus of answers offered for each question, are selected by the poll managers and set out in a 'ballot paper' available to the public as a free booklet and also on a website. An issue, or a question, or a menu of answers would only be changed (by the managers, as described in 'Ballot paper' below) if it is

found to be unsuitable or if the public has made up its mind and is no longer evolving its view. Such stabilizations of opinion would be identified by the poll as it shows levelled trends in opinions over successive polls, as discussed below. New issues would be placed on the ballot by the People's Forum managers whenever suitable topics become apparent to them. However, as noted below under 'Ballot paper' and in more detail in Chapter 7/ Elements of the design.../ Function 12/ 'E3', 'E2', the public will have a large degree of control over this agenda-setting.

Voting would be voluntary, a self-selecting process that invites all electors (citizens legally eligible to vote) to participate. Voters would be free to respond to as many or as few of the issues and questions as they like. One 'vote' may comprise answers to any questions on any of the issues presented. As noted above, the poll results would not be binding on legislatures, merely advisory. Initially this political influence is likely to be weaker than that of conventional opinion polls, but due to the effects of the structure of the People's Forum described below, it should become stronger and perhaps exceed the influence of opinion polls as public deliberation and voting continues over the years. Repetition of the same questions over many years would provide a consistent agenda, promoting continuity in the associated public debates. This should facilitate the development of public opinion on these questions and create or accelerate trends in the opinions of that part of the community that is voting. The annual repetition of the poll would allow these trends to be plotted. On those questions where participating opinion is stable, or where the trend has flattened out in the last few years of polling, the process would indicate that the community in general is satisfied with these views. These questions could then be taken out of the poll.

Voting process

The People's Forum poll would be open for voting for a week each time it is held, to give time for public interest to be stimulated by daily progressive tallies during that week and to help ensure that those who intend to vote do not forget to do it.

Votes are to be lodged by telephone or internet. Tallying would be electronic and thus virtually instantaneous, so that each night of the week of polling the cumulative results on selected issues may be shown on television. The internet and print media could also give daily updates that might cover all the issues on the ballot and include charts illustrating the voting trends on each issue over the years up to the present event. At least in the early phase of operation of the Forum, this media coverage would not be legally required because this would make establishment of the institution much more difficult by requiring strong government support. It is hoped that many media outlets would see a potential for growth in public demand for their coverage of the Forum's activities and provide it to help the demand grow and expand their ratings and market. They could expect this effect not only during the week of voting, but also in the form of an increased demand for information on the subjects covered by the ballot paper. The manager of one television channel in Australia has been asked about providing free daily coverage of voting in such a system over one week each year and he indicated an interest in doing this as a news and current affairs service. Forum managers would encourage such cooperation by issuing daily summaries of the voting, ready for transmission and printing.

Ways of ensuring one vote per elector per poll are discussed in Chapter 7 under Function 12/ 'E22 Voting security', which focuses mainly on using the electoral roll in the Australian situation. The ideal voting security system would allow spontaneity of voting, so that registration is not a prerequisite and the elector can vote on impulse at any time during the week the poll is open. Spontaneity of voting allows those who become concerned about the way the poll is currently going in particular issues to vote and to urge others to vote before it closes at the end of the week. Such interactions should help to get people involved in the process during the week of voting and this may encourage wider discussion and deliberation of the issues presented throughout the year in anticipation of the next poll. Voters who decide to change a vote they have lodged may do so before the poll closes. Voting on impulse would work against the objective of giving political influence to citizens who have given serious thought to issues (see 'An element of meritocracy' under 'Major functions of the People's Forum' below) but it should help to draw the

hitherto disengaged into the process. People who become involved in voting in this way may then pay more attention to the issues and develop their deliberative skills and habits by dealing with the types of questions posed, as explained under 'Ballot paper' below. It may be anticipated that holding the poll open for a week and allowing voters to change their vote during this period may encourage manipulation by special interests, perhaps by scare tactics applied through the media. This seems unlikely to be effective because voters will have had the previous year to reconsider the issues and any sudden intensive polling event-based attempt to sway them may look obviously underhand. Interests that are attacked in this way will have a few days to respond to some of it before the close of the poll and may also carry on their counterattack through the year before the next poll. A positive aspect of such competition is that it should increase the discussion of issues and thereby facilitate deliberative effects between polls. If manipulation during the polling event becomes a real problem, then voting can be made irrevocable and the event could also be restricted to one day. Further consideration of countermeasures against manipulation is given in Chapter 7/ 'Function 9'.

Having the voting event run for a week and allowing voting on impulse may be important practices only for the first few years of polling, in order to encourage as many citizens as possible to become involved. It may then seem advisable to move out of the introductory phase by making prior registration obligatory, and/or to reduce the voting period to a weekend or a day, in order to make voting a more premeditated act, thus giving the results a more deliberated status in the eyes of the public. However, these changes may not make the poll results reflect a more considered opinion as they would help the strongly prejudiced to be well represented. This effect, together with reduction of the public exposure of the poll during voting, may lower its profile or status and thus the deliberation it stimulates. These changes are therefore not recommended at this stage, but experience in managing a People's Forum may indicate they are worth trying.

Ballot paper

A People's Forum ballot paper would treat an indefinite number of fundamental long-running issues. As well as being extensive, this agenda should include the most controversial of such issues, to provide something of interest to as many people as possible and to stimulate public involvement. Although the number of issues treated could be very large, the attention span of the public will limit publication of poll results by the mass media to perhaps 100 issues and of these, less than 10 might be focused on at each poll. Newspapers may be inclined to cover a much greater number of issues than television and radio. If the number of issues voted on is very large, complete listings of the results and trends may be published in more specialized outlets such as websites, magazines, technical journals and books. A Forum for a nation of federated states would provide different ballot papers for each state to pose questions on state affairs as well as questions on national policy and these different papers would be coordinated so that the same national questions were posed in all of them.

The description of each issue that the ballot paper gives should be concise and limited to perhaps less than a page. Where appropriate, the description should relate that issue to others that the respondent is invited to consider before answering the questions on this one. Several questions would be posed on each issue and where possible these would include 'justification questions' that inquire into the reasons for the voter's response to preceding question on that issue, in order to promote the questioning of prejudice and values. Poll results on justification questions should also stimulate constructive public debate on issues between polls. Each question on the ballot is to be accompanied by a range of answers for the voter's choice. Other types of questions would also be posed where appropriate such as 'implementation' and 'willingness to pay', as discussed in Chapter 7/ Elements of the design.../ Function 1/ 'E13'.

As the menus of issues, questions and answers offered to the voter would be on public display in the ballot paper for years, criticism and endorsement of these menus would be invited from the public and plenty of time would be available for

reactions by both the managers of the poll and the public. It would thus be an open process that places the managers under constant public scrutiny to ensure relevance, comprehensiveness, competence and balance in the selection and framing of the menus of issues, questions and answers. The penalty for a public perception of poor performance would be the collapse of the People's Forum through distrust and boycott by citizens.

The ballot paper would help citizens deal with an issue if the description it gave and the questions it posed summarized the problem to a few crucial concepts that they could easily understand and find helpful. Complex issues of technology, risk and values must be distilled to their essentials and questions must be incisive and oriented to problem-solving. The managers of the poll should be well informed on political issues and have skills in the psychology of public deliberation, in issue analysis and in question technique.

The execution of the Forum's strategies

The execution of both of the Forum's strategies depends on the People's Forum ballot paper. For the first strategy - encouraging the development of mass public opinion - the paper must cover the issues that are the most important for citizens to carefully consider. Politicians may avoid some of these because they confront electors with costly choices. The ballot paper must help to solve issues by investigating their causes and this may include addressing other issues that are related to these problems, so these must also be placed on the ballot. As the Forum's polls will reflect any development of opinion that such tactics facilitate, its results should become widely known for reflecting relatively well-considered opinion and this should generate political influence for these polls. The Forum's first strategy will therefore help execute its second strategy as well: that of producing political influence for the best developed policy ideas.

The second strategy is elitist in that it aims to empower the views of those who are more concerned with the issues. However, rather than being a problem for

democratic equality of opportunities for participation, this elitism may help to ameliorate disengagement from politics by encouraging the disengaged to join the 'elite' by voting in the Forum.

If these polls are to create a strong political influence for the opinion they help develop, they must become popular public institutions. Such popularity would be indicated not just by whether a significant proportion of the electorate votes in the Forum polls, but also - and mainly - by the status of their results in the eyes of the public. This status of Forum polls should show whether the general public expects government to implement their findings and it may depend on whether citizens develop approval for the People's Forum process. If and when these polls are run, they would be compared with conventional opinion polls. This should draw the attention of the public to the hazardous influence of the latter. Leo Jeffres (2005, 617-8) observes that for public opinion polls there is a

well-documented public willingness to offer opinions on topics citizens know nothing about and respond to ambiguous questions about fictitious public affairs issues... In a democracy, and the consumer society, the public itself, political leadership, and influentials need 'feedback' about each other for the system to work. The question is whether we can improve poll results to merit the position surveys occupy in society today.

The People's Forum is intended to provide an affirmative answer to Jeffres' query, for it should reflect less suggestion and lack of knowledge and more considered judgement. Much of this judgement will be facilitated by the continuity of deliberation that is invited by the Forum's repetitive process. By showing trends in the development of opinion the Forum might also indicate whether further progress in sophistication appears likely.

Another description of the way the Forum is anticipated to operate is given below in 'Major functions of the People's Forum'. This focuses on five major functions of this institution. However before it is presented, a system of evaluating such functions is developed. As this system evaluates functions of designs for governance it can be used to evaluate different institutions for purposes similar to those of the

Forum. The Forum is evaluated with this system at the conclusion of the descriptions of its five major functions and this evaluation is later compared with evaluations by the same system, of three other designs of institutions for similar purposes.

Evaluating democratic institutions

The procedure used here to evaluate institutions for facilitating democratic government is derived from Graham Smith's (2009) very useful proposal of similar purpose, which uses the concepts of democratic and institutional goods. His democratic goods "arguably... embody Robert Dahl's classic criteria of a democratic process" (G. Smith 2009, 13) and are the extent to which certain effects are, or might be expected, to be provided by the institution being evaluated. Dahl's criteria are slightly different in that they are opportunities for, rather than anticipated realizations of, similar effects. Smith specifies four democratic goods: "inclusiveness", the degree to which citizens of diverse social perspectives are involved in the decision-making process of the institution being assessed; "popular control" of decision-making by the institution, which means control by those participating in it; "considered judgement" by participants (G. Smith 2009, 25); and the "transparency" of this process to all citizens.

Inclusiveness comprises the presence and the voice provided by the institution for citizens of all social perspectives. Presence is the participation that the institution provides. Voice is the hearing for any participant, together with her influence over the output of the institution. An institution that is closed to the general public (for example a random sample such as a deliberative poll or a citizens' assembly) may provide presence for all citizens in the sense of good representation, but this is not the same as providing actual presence, or providing the possibility of this, for all citizens (Saward 2000, 5). So closed institutions may provide substantive presence only for participants and not for all citizens. They may also provide voice only for participants. So inclusiveness may be substantively provided only for participants by closed institutions, but may be provided by open institutions to all citizens. Popular

control may be provided only to participants by both closed and open institutions (G. Smith 2009, 13). This control is over decision-making, which may be roughly classified into four stages: problem definition, option analysis, option selection and implementation (G. Smith 2009, 23). Considered judgement may also be substantively provided only to participants by the institution, whether it is open or closed. This leaves transparency as the only democratic good that may be provided to all citizens by both open and closed institutions. These potential provisions of democratic goods are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2
Provisions of democratic goods by institutions

Recipients of democratic goods	Type of institution	
	Open	Closed
Participants only	-	I
	P	P
	C	C
	-	-
All citizens (including participants)	I	-
	-	-
	-	-
	T	T
Democratic goods: I inclusiveness, P popular control, C considered judgement, T transparency.		

As an open institution may provide inclusiveness to all citizens but a closed one can only provide it for participants, high (or low) inclusiveness for an open institution will affect many more citizens than high (or low) inclusiveness for one that is closed. This prevents evaluations of provisions of inclusiveness by open and closed institutions from being meaningfully compared. A good is presumably something of value to people or other sentient beings, so the comparison of

provisions of goods by several institutions requires a standard set of recipients of these various provisions in order to judge how well this set is provided for, by each institution. As closed institutions may provide inclusiveness for participants and open ones may provide it for all citizens there is no common set of recipients for which we might assess how well all types of institution provide this good. This is a major problem for using democratic goods, so for this reason as well as others, these are replaced here with a new classification, developed as follows.

As democracy is government by the people, ideal democracy is ideal government by the people. This would seem to comprise ideal government outcomes and ideal participation by the people as they produce these outcomes. This combination of two ideals might be expected in both Graham Smith's democratic goods and Dahl's (2006, 8-10) criteria for ideal democracy. Democratic goods may thus comprise 'governmental goods' and 'participatory goods'. As discussed below, this appears to be the case, so governmental and participatory goods are recognized in the evaluation system described below, rather than democratic goods. This classification leads to the identification of four governmental goods, two of which turn out to be the aims of the two strategies of the People's Forum. Another reason for not referring to democratic goods is that one of these, transparency, may be more usefully considered to be an institutional good, as explained below. A further reason is that given above, that the meaning of inclusiveness varies from closed institutions to open institutions. This confusion is eliminated here by interpreting all participatory and governmental goods of an institution as those it provides to all citizens, whether they participate in it or not. This is consistent with the meaning of institutional goods as defined by Graham Smith and also as institutional goods are interpreted below. This new system of evaluating institutions thus assesses all the goods they provide in terms of their provision to all citizens, which means it assesses the contributions of institutions to government. If several institutions are evaluated with this system, it is their effects on government that are being compared.

There is also another objective here, in replacing democratic goods with participatory and governmental goods. This is to make sure that it is the requirements for good government that are being investigated rather than the

requirements for good democracy. This avoids assuming that ideal democracy is ideal government, without precluding this possibility. It also avoids following one theoretical model of ideal democracy to the exclusion of others. In looking for good government, the criterion for 'good' is the public choice notion stated in Chapter 2/ 'The function of democratic government', that a government is good if it provides a good supply of public goods. To judge whether this supply is good, Beetham's (1992, 42) fifth liberal democratic principle is used: the judgement is to be made by the citizens. To justify this, I propose that citizens are the best judges because it is they who need, use and, to a considerable degree, provide public goods.

As a good government does a good job of providing public goods it is likely to be very democratic because it will provide the very important public good of equality, which includes political equality. Although a very democratic society will have political equality this may not be sufficient to provide good government. This discussion of the goods that institutions for democratic government might be expected to provide is now followed by a specification of their different types, grouped into three classes: participatory, governmental and institutional.

Participatory goods

Robert Dahl's (1998, 37-38; 2006, 8-9) five basic criteria for an ideal democracy are: (1) equal and effective opportunities for all members of the demos to *communicate their views* on public policy to other members, before the relevant policy is enacted (his "effective participation" criterion); (2) equal and effective opportunities for all members to *vote on enactment* of policy, together with equality of their votes; (3) equal and effective opportunities for each member to learn about policy proposals (his "enlightened understanding"); (4) exclusive opportunity for the members to *control the agenda*; and (5) *inclusion* of virtually all adults and social groups as having these four rights as members of the demos. It is suggested that the third criterion of opportunities to gain enlightened understanding is fundamentally different from the other four as it appears necessary for quality of participation rather than equality of

participation, if the latter means equality of freedom to participate. If Dahl's equalities of freedom to participate in politics (criteria 1, 2, 4 and 5) are to produce good government (which is a good provision of public goods) they must be complemented with quality of participation. The availability of equal and effective opportunities for enlightened understanding is therefore considered here to be a governmental good, while Dahl's criteria 1, 2, 4 and 5 are considered to describe participatory goods.

This establishment of a set of four participatory goods and one governmental good replaces the four democratic goods. This is consistent with Dahl's statement that "all the members [of a democracy] are to be treated (under the constitution) *as if* they were equally qualified to participate in the process of making decisions about the policies the association will pursue" (Dahl 1998, 36, 37, emphasis added). The words "as if" indicate that Dahl's concern is with the justice of all members having the freedom or right to participate, rather than with all members actually being equally qualified to do this, in the sense of being equally well-informed and benevolent. Consistent with this meaning, Dahl (2006, 10) later emphasized the significance of rights. "Democracy consists, then, not only of political processes. It is also necessarily a system of fundamental rights."

As noted above, the democratic good of popular control is control over problem definition, option analysis, option choice and implementation of the choice. As such, popular control is only partly covered by my participatory goods. Problem definition and option analysis is covered by opportunities to control the agenda (Dahl's criterion 4) and option selection is covered by opportunities for voting (Dahl's criterion 2). The missing ingredient is popular control of the implementation of policy decisions, so another good is needed to cover this. This is called 'popular implementation' and as it concerns the execution of government it is considered a governmental good and listed as such in the next section. Popular implementation of the policy decisions of an institution means that the public values the policy choices it makes and expects or demands that politicians heed them. Popular implementation also means that this popular pressure continues over time to ensure that these policy choices are followed up in a sustained manner.

Governmental goods

The classification of opportunities for *enlightened understanding* as a governmental good implies that such opportunities can be used to evaluate any form of government, whether it is democratic or not. This appears to be so, because as it is the people who need, use and, to a considerable degree, provide public goods it is only they who are in the position to decide what provision of these is good or bad. To do this competently they need to be well enough informed to be able to recognize public goods and assess their benefits and costs. So they need equal and very effective opportunities to gain enlightened understanding. The provision of these opportunities would virtually implement the first strategy of the People's Forum - to accelerate the development of mass public opinion on strategic public issues. If non-democratic governments fail to provide such opportunities they may produce poor government, if only because they have a problem in conducting credible evaluations of their performance. Democracies that fail to provide these opportunities are also very likely to produce poor government, because the people have a large influence on public policy.

However, even in political systems that provide opportunities for enlightened understanding, the result in terms of the provision of public goods may be flawed - at times very badly - unless the understandings of relatively enlightened citizens are enabled to prevail over the understandings of the others. This is necessary to address the third element of triple dysfunction, excessive compromise. The significance of this problem has been described by psychiatrists Wilfred Abse and Lucie Jessner (1962, 86).

In the democratic system of values, men have equal rights, but they are not equal in ability, personal development, and education. A democracy which promotes illusions in this respect is undermining its own strength: its power to foster and release the full capacity of the group.

It is therefore suggested that the other strategy of the People's Forum, 'the political influence of *informed citizen opinion prevailing* over that of less informed citizen opinion' describes a second governmental good. However, if this prevalence is to be democratic, it must have the acquiescence of the relatively ill-informed. This is required by Dahl's first criterion: the participatory good of equal and effective opportunities for all members to advise others of their views before a policy is adopted. The manner in which acquiescence should take place is specified by the three other participatory goods: Dahl's criteria of equal and effective opportunities - to vote on policy, for popular control of the agenda and for all classes of member to take part in the process.

This second governmental good may seem an unwarranted extension of this class of good because it appears undemocratic by disregarding equality in the freedom of citizens to participate. However as a governmental good it is not intended to specify equality of freedom: this is done by participatory goods. It is the combination of those goods with governmental goods that produces "democratic goods".

There is also a need for innovations to provide "defence against manipulation of the public interest" (Smith 2001, 77) and this appears to be a third governmental good. It may be considered that this is already specified by the first and second governmental goods. 'Equal and effective opportunities for all citizens to gain enlightened understanding' and 'the political influence of informed citizen opinion prevailing over that of less informed citizen opinion' both imply protection from distortion by special interests. However, to ensure that this protection is explicitly considered in the evaluation of designs of institutions, it seems useful to recognize *defence against manipulation* as a third governmental good. This includes prevention of co-option of citizens by public authorities.

Finally there is the fourth governmental good of *popular implementation*, the popular control of the implementation of policy described above at the conclusion of 'Participatory goods'.

Institutional goods

Institutional goods are the desirable qualities we would expect of institutions in general and they form two subclasses: *efficiency* and *transferability* (G. Smith 2009, 13, 26-7). Efficiency, as applied here, is the degree to which an institution for facilitating government minimizes the costs it imposes on both citizens and public authorities, so it includes economy of time and effort for participants, as well as financial economy. The transferability of an institution for facilitating government is its ability to work in three political contexts: the *type of political system*, the *type of issue* dealt with and the *scale* of the application of the institution, from local to global. Each institutional good is experienced by the whole polity for which the institution is expected to perform.

One cause of transferability failure might be a lack of transparency to citizens of the design's process that causes them to distrust and reject it. Transferability is therefore considered here to include *transparency* to all citizens, which Graham Smith classifies as a democratic good. Transparency may be crucial for the transferability of an institution to a liberal democracy but not to an authoritarian political system, so it is a component of transferability to 'type of political system'.

Another characteristic of an institution that affects its transferability to type of political system is the *feasibility of introducing* the institution. This is a crucial component of transferability because whether the institution functions depends entirely on whether it can be initiated in the existing environment. As John Parkinson (2006, ix) notes in respect of proposals for deliberative institutions, they must show "how to get to those end points from where we are now. Otherwise the dream of a genuinely deliberative democracy will remain just that, a dream". The major determinant of feasibility of introduction in democratic political systems appears to be whether this requires political will or private initiative. Political will is usually much more difficult to develop in a democracy than private initiative, because sufficient private action may involve the motivation of only a few people, such as some with money or other types of power, whereas raising significant political will may mean motivating many thousands or millions of people. A private

initiative might begin with the writing and publishing of a book that describes an innovation in some detail, together with the case for implementing it. Such communication may motivate a few interest groups or individuals with the necessary resources to run a trial or demonstration of the innovation that may then generate the political will to establish it as a permanent institution. In contrast to this approach, if the innovation is of a type that requires political will for its initial demonstration, then it faces the problem that this will is likely to be averse to new institutions that significantly change politics; because politicians are oriented to, self-selected for, and experienced in, dealing with the current political system. Observing the US political environment, John Gastil (2007, 646) cautions:

Leaders in both parties... are likely to reject any serious threat to a status quo that both sides believe, in their hearts, favors their own party. Special interests accustomed to easy access to government will likely resist the idea with even more ferocity, and... there is no reason to doubt their power.

The Citizens' Assemblies of British Columbia and Ontario illustrate the limitation imposed by the requirement of political will for initiating an innovation, as they were constrained not only by having their findings put to a referendum, but by this requiring a supermajority for any change to be effected. In addition, these assemblies have been restricted to a type of issue - electoral reform - that many citizens think cannot be left to politicians. As Graham Smith (2005, 113) observes: "public authorities lack the will, resources and freedom to embrace democratic innovations." If an innovative political institution with potential for significant impact requires political will for its introduction, its feasibility of introduction is likely to be low, but if private initiative is sufficient to introduce it, then this feasibility may be high, if the design appears promising.

The incentive given by a design to encourage all citizens to use that institution as a means of participating in democratic government might appear to be another transferability good. "Citizens must believe that participation will make a difference... that the results of participation exercises are able to influence decision-makers... Citizens must be respected and given incentives (or a reason) to

participate” (Smith 2005, 113). Whether a design is open or closed, citizens’ incentive to use that institution is taken here to be the incentive they have to use it by approving it and expecting their government to implement the policy choices it produces. This incentive is not taken to be citizens’ incentive to use it by participating in it, because very few can experience this incentive with closed designs. This definition makes *incentive to use the institution* a transferability good for a democracy rather than a participatory good.

Incentive to use an institution should arise from “what most psychologists believe are the four core motives that influence our decision-making in social dilemmas... understanding, belonging, trusting and self-enhancing” (van Vugt 2009, 41). The degree to which a design might stimulate these motives may be judged by inspecting its institutional, participatory and governmental goods. The institutional good of transparency will produce trust and both participatory and governmental goods will evoke feelings of understanding, belonging, trust and self-enhancement. Assessments of citizens’ *incentive to use the institution* will therefore duplicate the assessments of the other goods, so it is not included in this evaluative framework. Another way of looking at this duplication is that the summation of the assessments of institutional, participatory and governmental goods of a design is intended to assess its value as a democratic institution, which is similar to evaluating citizens’ incentive to use it by expecting their government to implement its policy choices.

The feasibility of introducing the institution suggests another transferability good, the feasibility of maintaining it. In a democracy, this is likely to ultimately depend on popular support for the institution, whether it is supported and run directly by the people or by their government through policy or law or constitutional requirement. Such popular support was discussed above as the people’s incentive to use the institution by approving it and expecting their government to implement the policy choices it produces. As noted there, this popular support is assessed by the provision of the institutional goods already specified, together with the participatory and governmental goods described above. Feasibility of maintaining the institution is therefore not included as another good.

Evaluating goods of democratic institutions

The foregoing modification of Graham Smith's evaluative framework changes the number of goods to be assessed from eight to thirteen and this has enabled some of them to be more specific, so their assessment can be more focused. This has encouraged numerical ratings to be allocated for any design to indicate how well each good is likely to be provided by that design for the polity. The summary of the next section does this for the People's Forum and then, in 'The People's Forum compared with principles and designs for deliberative democracy', the assessment is repeated for three more designs. All four designs are then given a preliminary comparison by summing their goods ratings (see Table 2). This is a very simplified overview and must be regarded as merely a rough indication of the relative promise of these four institutions. However, it invites three ways of systematically reviewing the comparison: by reconsidering how well each design might provide each good; by considering whether different goods should be given different weightings; and by considering whether the evaluative framework needs changing. As noted above, the framework assesses provisions of goods for all citizens of the polity, not just for those working within the institutional design being evaluated. It may be tempting to regard an institution that internally achieves high provisions of goods with favour, but if it does not provide them for the whole polity, it fails.

I now prepare for an assessment of the People's Forum by describing five of its major functions.

Major functions of the People's Forum

The five major functions described here give a broad, but incomplete account of how the People's Forum should execute its two strategies and also how it should provide institutional, participatory and governmental goods. The five functions are: public deliberation of issues; public deliberation about what issues to deliberate;

focusing on basic issues; meritocratic influence; and economizing the effort required of citizens. The contributions that a function makes towards the Forum's strategies and the three classes of goods are indicated at the conclusion of the description of that function. After the five functions are described, their provisions of goods are summarized for the Forum as a whole, by being allocated numerical ratings to indicate how complete they are expected to be.

Public deliberation: an open, slow and in some ways careful consideration by citizens

The People's Forum would provide a slow process that allows years for public judgment to evolve. Its poll would be open to all electors to vote; it would invite all citizens to publicly debate the issues on its agenda (the ballot paper); and its format would impose a minimum of control over citizens' deliberations in that the agenda would be open to amendment by citizens, little information would be supplied by the pollster and deliberation would not be facilitated by mediated group discussions run by the People's Forum. The Forum would focus on assisting current processes of public discussion, argument and dissemination of information to produce more considered judgements through its selection and framing of issues, its incisive choices of questions and its repetition of many voting events. This repetition would give a continuity of public discourse and deliberation because the agenda presented by the ballot paper is maintained for as long as possible, with perhaps most changes made by adding new issues to it and retiring others as they are resolved. Public discourse should be encouraged by the vote giving annual feedback to the people on what those who are engaged are thinking, why they are thinking this and how their views are changing. This should provoke and inform further reflection, enquiry, discussion and debate. The People's Forum poll would only be open for voting by electors, but as the process would be public and transparent, the whole community could contribute to the arguments, to the search for information and to the development of opinion.

This function of public deliberation is intended to help execute the first strategy of the People's Forum, the development of mass public opinion. It would also provide a basis for the second strategy (producing political influence for the part of public opinion that is likely to be relatively well developed) by registering the views of those citizens who are interested in the issues it treats. Three institutional goods of transferability should be provided: facilitation of policy development on *strategic issues* and the *transparency* needed for politics to operate well in a *large scale* democracy. This function would also provide the participatory good of opportunity for all members to *communicate their views* to each other; and the governmental good of opportunity for all to gain *enlightened understanding*, which is also the first strategy of the Forum. The continuing nature of the Forum's deliberations will also provide the governmental goods of *defence against manipulation* (see Chapter 7/ Elements of the design.../ 'Function 9') and *popular implementation* of policy.

Deliberating what is to be deliberated

The People's Forum would assist deliberation of public policy by providing a forum not only for specific issues, but for debating which issues should be run through this process and the most useful questions to pose on them. As the ballot paper would display for long periods the People's Forum menus of issues, questions and answer options, these menus will be open to criticism or endorsement by the public. The voluntary voting of the poll will oblige its managers to preface the ballot paper with an invitation to citizens to comment on it and suggest new issues, questions and answer choices. Any well-managed controversy on such aspects of the ballot paper should lift the profile of both the poll and the issues it treats, assisting the deliberation of issues, the engagement of citizens with the Forum and its management.

This function should help execute the first strategy of the People's Forum. It should also provide an institutional good of transferability, because inviting the public to help set the agenda produces a *transparency* that should help generate the

political will to maintain the institution. This invitation also provides the participatory good of equal and effective opportunities to *control the agenda* and the public discussions this will foster should promote the governmental good of opportunities for citizens to gain *enlightened understanding* (the Forum's first strategy).

Examining basics

Daniel Yankelovich (1992) has stated that public opinion on an issue often develops slowly over a long period, at least ten years for a complex issue. This may be an understatement, for it seems likely that the process may stall on issues where underlying assumptions remain unrecognized and/or unquestioned. Illusions may thus arise of public judgment having developed completely when a potential remains for it to be transformed by more thought and information. The long, slow and open-ended form of deliberation that the People's Forum facilitates should be especially suited to such public examination of basic assumptions. Its transparency to scrutiny by everybody would help raise new questions, evidence and insights. The justification questioning referred to under 'Ballot paper' above and other types of questions discussed in Chapter 7/ Elements of the design.../ Function 1/ E11-E13, should facilitate critical inquiry and help the public shake itself free of prejudicial hang-ups. It may be found that for some issues deliberation may never end, as each generation may want to think for itself and re-examine the foundations of its opinion. In such ways, the People's Forum may allow citizens to reassess not only their public policies and laws, but their values and culture. This will affect public policy. As Slovic and his colleagues (Kahan et al. 2006) emphasize, culture is a critical determinant of the quality of deliberation. Tim Jackson (2009, 203) regards such reassessment as crucial: "the cultural drift that reinforces individualism at the expense of society, and supports innovation at the expense of tradition, is a distortion of what it means to be human."

This function should help execute the first strategy of the Forum and promote the institutional goods of *efficiency* of operation and transferability to fundamental or *strategic issues*. It will also help provide the governmental goods of opportunities for gaining *enlightened understanding* (the Forum's first strategy) and possibly some *defence against manipulation* by focusing public deliberation on strategic questions, which may be difficult for special interests to publicly distort in a credible manner.

An element of meritocracy

Meritocracy is often considered incompatible with democracy. As it is government by those citizens with the ability to govern well, many citizens are excluded. Those without the capacity, interest and time are discouraged or prevented from participating and this appears to destroy the political equality that is the core of democratic practice. However, Dahl (2006, 8-10) defines this equality as equality of opportunity, or a right, rather than equality of action. To maintain this right we must be careful that a meritocratic design does not prevent citizen participation but merely encourages those with the ability to contribute to good government, to actively participate. The others might be encouraged to participate in the passive mode of giving support to the contributions of those who are actively engaged, or by becoming actively engaged themselves if they become concerned about political trends. The meritocratic element of the Forum is designed to provide governmental goods without damaging the participatory goods that define a government as being democratic, as discussed above in Evaluating democratic institutions/ 'Participatory goods'.

Because conventional opinion polls systematically sample whole communities, they may hobble the competence of democratic governments by influencing their policies with views that are ill-informed, as discussed in Chapter 2/ 'Excessive compromise'. The governmental good of 'informed citizen opinion prevailing over less informed citizen opinion' is intended to avoid such restriction of competence. The People's Forum seeks to provide this good by using the self-selective sampling

of voluntary voting to bypass views that are ill-informed due to disengagement. This meritocratic device may trouble those who emphasize the importance of political equality for democracy, but it should be noted that Dahl (2006, 9) specifies equality as “equal and effective opportunities” to participate politically, rather than equal participation by every citizen. The conflict here is between ideal democracy and ideal government, which is discussed above in ‘Evaluating democratic institutions’, where it is proposed to be managed by dividing democratic goods into participatory and governmental goods.

The degree to which self-selective sampling will reflect more sophisticated views than opinion polls may initially be limited, because people who are concerned about issues but do not value public goods or are ill-informed will vote along with others who are also concerned but more inclined to consider the value of public goods and are better informed because of this inclination. Across a succession of polls however, the encouragement that the Forum should give to widespread deliberation (see ‘Public deliberation...’ and ‘Deliberating what is to be deliberated’ above, together with Chapter 7/ Elements of the design.../ ‘Function 1’) may succeed in increasing the sophistication of mass public opinion. Any such deliberative effect is likely to be greatest with the section of the public that closely follows the issues presented by the People’s Forum and votes in it, so this engagement should significantly differentiate Forum results from those of opinion polls. The meritocratic element of the Forum therefore comprises two effects: bypassing those who choose to remain disengaged and facilitating the development of the opinions of those who engage. In addition to being meritocratic, the Forum may also slightly lift the sophistication of mass public opinion through the visibility of the public discourse it fosters.

Public disapproval of the meritocratic self-selection of Forum voting should be moderated by awareness that voluntary voting is used by almost all liberal democracies for the selection of representatives and by many for referendums. Acceptance and appreciation of this ‘elitism’ may increase with time, because as the Forum operates it will be compared with random sample opinion polls and this should help citizens recognize the danger of giving political influence to the apathy and ignorance expressed in the latter. This elitism may therefore come to be widely

regarded by citizens as reason to accord status and political influence to Forum polls, so that a low voter turnout (say five per cent of those eligible to vote) does not impress citizens (and therefore does not impress their politicians) as a good reason to ignore their results and trends. Low turnouts may be taken to mean that the results reflect only the views of those citizens who are really interested in the issues covered. Exposure of the general public to the Forum process should therefore slowly develop a public expectation that political representatives should be guided by its findings, as required by the Forum's second strategy. Of course this potential for political influence will encourage special interest groups to mobilize their supporters to vote in the Forum and to produce propaganda to sway other potential voters to their point of view. This should help rather than hinder the public deliberation of issues, for such groups are likely to be countered by others expressing different views and voting accordingly in the Forum's polls. The Forum ballot paper should help guide these debates in constructive directions by its balanced descriptions of the issues and its choice of the most crucial questions for each.

Voting in the Forum by dogmatic personalities should give them more exposure to opposing viewpoints and information, for the Forum's issue descriptions and questions would be designed to do this. Dogmatists may thus feel obliged to publicly engage with arguments that oppose theirs. The Forum's repetitive polling would prolong such discussion and argument and help it stay focused on specific questions by running substantially the same agenda for many years. In this situation participants will need to listen to opposing arguments to see how they might improve their own to lift the vote for their view in future polls. The Forum may thus help dogmatists, as well as open-minded participants, to develop more reflective, informed and socially responsible thinking. However, especially in the early years of a Forum's operation, some dogmatic types may reject it as an insidious evil, for its questioning approach - its calling for openness, dialogue and exchange of ideas - is the antithesis of belief in faith. As John Dryzek (2006, 47) observes: "Those asserting identities may feel insulted by the very idea that questions going to their core be deliberated. What they want is instead 'cathartic' communication that unifies the group and demands respect from others." As discussed in Chapter 7/ Concluding

comments.../ 'Perceptions of bias' and also Chapter 7/ Elements of the design.../ Function 1/ 'E10', there are genetic and perhaps learned psychological limits to the loosening of dogmatic attitudes, but any achievements in this direction should help to improve democratic governance.

The intention of the People's Forum to bypass those who remain disengaged is not an attempt to ignore people who are alienated or demoralized, but to develop political influence for those who think about and want to express their views on problems that are persistent and important, including that of alienation. The Forum may be able to help ameliorate alienation by sustaining a public discourse on what to do about it and by giving public-spirited citizens a platform for advocating the interests of those who are alienated. The operation of the Forum also offers the marginalized an opportunity to have a say that is currently not available to them. It may even give them an incentive to do this, for if they hear that its polls 'bypass the disengaged' they may suspect this refers to them and rebel against the label by voting. Some of them may then discuss their views with others who feel alienated and urge them to vote as well.

It is noted above that the meritocratic function of the Forum should give it political influence, which means the Forum would be executing its second strategy - the development of political influence for that part of public opinion that is most likely to be well developed. Some of the participatory goods of equal and effective opportunities for members to *inform each other of their views* on public policy, to *vote* and to *control the agenda* may be generated by meritocracy because the political influence it creates for the Forum should encourage citizens to use the Forum by debating the issues it deals with, voting in its polls and reviewing its agenda. This incentive may not be generated in the first year or two of operation of the first Forums that are attempted, but it should develop as Forums become established, if they gain reputations for potential or actual influence. The participatory good of *full inclusion* may be poorly provided by the operation of the Forum if many politically disengaged citizens are unmoved. Political influence from meritocracy should foster the governmental goods of *popular implementation* and, by stimulating public debate on the issues presented, produce opportunities for *enlightened understanding*. The last

effect is also the Forum's first strategy. The governmental good of *defence against manipulation* may not materialize with the meritocratic element because although its political influence may give the Forum a public profile that may expose manipulation, it also provides incentive to manipulate. However, the direct and major effect of the Forum's meritocracy is to produce the governmental good of the political influence of *informed citizen opinion prevailing* over that of less informed citizen opinion, a good that is the Forum's second strategy.

Economizing citizen effort

Any attempt to increase political participation by citizens must minimize the time and effort it demands from them (Beetham 1992; G. Smith 2009, 18-19). For the People's Forum to work under this constraint, no more than one poll per year after it has been established seems both necessary and sufficient if it focuses on helping the public to indicate only the broad strategic directions in public policy, leaving the mass of detailed decision-making within these guidelines to politicians. This periodicity also allows time for public discourse to produce some change in the opinion registered by successive polls. The 'economy of time' provided by the design of the People's Forum is further explained below in Chapter 7/ Function 12/ 'E10'.

This function helps execute the Forum's first strategy of developing mass public opinion. It promotes the institutional good of *efficiency* by minimizing the time required from citizens and thereby fosters the participatory goods of all members having equal and effective opportunities for *communicating their policy views to each other, to vote and to control the agenda*. By minimizing the task for citizens, this function also fosters the governmental goods of opportunities for citizens to gain *enlightened understanding* (the Forum's first strategy) and *popular implementation*.

Summary of the effects of the Forum's major functions

To summarize how well these five functions would enable the Forum to provide institutional, participatory and governmental goods, the likely provision of each good is assessed with a rating on a scale of 0 (the Forum cannot provide that good) to 5 (it should be extremely effective in providing that good). Each rating is noted in brackets after the name of the good and is intended only as a rough indication of effectiveness of provision. Different readers may give different ratings, based on their estimation of the potential for the Forum to perform. These ratings are entered into a table later in this chapter, to compare the effects that the People's Forum and three other institutional designs appear to be likely to have on liberal democratic government.

Unless otherwise stated here, the following ratings are assessed from the preceding descriptions of functions. These indicate that the Forum should do a good job of providing the institutional good of *efficiency* (4). Of the four institutional goods comprising transferability, *transparency* (4) is high for the Forum and should give citizens confidence in using it. An element of transferability that is not indicated by this limited selection of five functions is that the Forum promises fairly high *feasibility* (3) to initiate, as it could be introduced to a liberal democracy by private initiative. This is discussed in the following section and analysed further in Chapter 7/ Elements of the design.../ 'Function 11'. Two other elements of transferability are well addressed: the Forum should help *large scale* (5) state, national, multinational and possibly global communities manage *strategic issues* (4). For participatory goods, the five major functions should provide opportunities for all citizens to *communicate their views to each other* (3), to *vote* (4) and to *control the agenda* (4), but *full inclusion* (1) is not likely to be realized. The governmental good of opportunities for all citizens to gain *enlightened understanding* (2) should be slightly provided. That of *informed opinion prevailing over less informed* (4) should be well provided, if transferability is high, which appears likely. The third governmental good of *defence against manipulation* (4) of the public interest should be assisted by the indefinite duration of public deliberation (as discussed below in Chapter 7/ Elements of the design.../

‘Function 9’) and also by the focus on examining basic aspects of issues, if these prove difficult for special interests to distort in a way that is credible to the public. *Popular implementation* (3) should be fairly effective in getting government to adopt the policy developed by the Forum and in seeing that it is implemented (see ‘Evaluating democratic institutions/ Participatory goods’ above).

Initiating and running the Forum

The potential ‘market’ for the People’s Forum design initially comprises liberal democratic state and national governments. It might then be adapted to international and global governance. Its operation in democracies may set examples that encourage publics under less democratic regimes to press for its establishment in those polities. A government could finance a People’s Forum as an independent service to the public and in doing so may have it managed by an NGO or a private business, to ensure that it is seen by the public to be entirely free of government control. Several attempts to interest politicians in this system have indicated that they are unlikely to provide it unless citizens experience it, develop a desire for it and then urge their governments to fund it. A demonstration trial therefore appears to be a necessary first step for its implementation. The design of the Forum enables such a demonstration to be done without government support, so funds for this purpose might be sought from philanthropic foundations, NGOs, citizens (via a donation website), opinion polling companies, media businesses, telecommunications companies or corporations interested in promoting their image or in improving government policy to create greater strategic certainty for corporate investments. A trial of the Forum could be initiated by an existing NGO or a few citizens who formed an NGO for this purpose. Such a body would attempt to raise the necessary money and if successful this would be used to hire a small team of perhaps five to ten people to establish and run the Forum. As noted in ‘The mission, strategies and shape of the People’s Forum/ Ballot paper’, “issues of technology, risk and values must be distilled to their essentials and questions must be incisive and

oriented to problem-solving.” The management team must therefore include members with a good knowledge of political issues and with skills in issue analysis, in poll question technique, in the psychology of public deliberation, in business management and in information technology. This team would arrange for some work to be outsourced, such as advertising the polls and applying information technology, so that they could focus on designing and compiling the ballot paper, on public relations, on supplying polling results and analysis to the media and on the overall management of the Forum. If the first year or two of the Forum’s operation generates positive public interest, this may start to produce political pressure for it to be accepted as a formal part of the apparatus of democratic government. If this happened, the state would take responsibility for funding the Forum, but its management must remain independent of government and entirely in the hands of its staff. The regulation of these managers would be done by citizens, for if the People’s Forum acquires a public reputation for bias, or irrelevance, or some other serious defect then citizens will destroy it by not voting in it and by encouraging their politicians not to fund it and to ignore its results.

In the Australian situation, the island state of Tasmania would be a suitable laboratory for a trial as its physical separation from the rest of the nation gives Tasmanians a distinct sense of being in a position to influence their future. The size of the Tasmanian population, at half a million, should be sufficient for vigorous debate on fundamental, long term issues. This state also has an extensive and continuing experience with very divisive issues so it should welcome a new way of approaching these. The cost of a three year trial of the People’s Forum here, based on telephone and internet voting, free hard-copy plus website ballot papers and some advertising, may be around Aus\$ five million. After three years such a test should be indicating whether the poll is starting to develop public acceptance as a political institution. During this period it may not have generated political influence, but be raising anticipation of this, be attracting increasing voter participation, be facilitating public thought on key issues and be showing trends in opinion on the issues it treats. The initiation of such a trial may stage the first three polls at six month intervals, to

generate publicity for the Forum and quickly pass through any backlash vote in reaction to initial poll results. Subsequent polls may then be annual events.

An obstacle to such a trial in Australia is that the Federal Government is prevented by law from making its electoral roll available to private interests which are not legally authorized to use it. If a non-government group is running the trial, this would preclude the possibility of high security impulse voting as discussed above under 'Voting process', but this problem may be tackled by the Forum running a poll sequence without serious voting security. If this relies on a web-site ballot paper without free hard copy, the cost of a three year demonstration may be around Aus\$ three million. This should enable the public to see the potential of the system, so if citizens then wanted to try it out as a functioning political institution, pressure of public opinion may elicit cooperation from the government, together with financial backing from this or other sources, to permit a fully operational poll. Once this was established and running successfully it may provide an example of public participation that attracts wide interest from around the world, prompting politicians or citizens to introduce the People's Forum to other states and nations and possibly adapting it for international and global applications.

The People's Forum compared with principles and designs for deliberative democracy

As the People's Forum is designed for large scale operation it has an overarching reach that could use input from other devices that operate in more limited ways. Such limitations may be that these devices cannot treat a large number of issues at the same time, facilitate deliberation of issues with fundamental or systemic impacts and include many thousands of citizens in their deliberations. An example of a device that has at least the first and last of these limitations is the Deliberative Poll®, which is briefly described in Chapter 9. This device could give some indication, each time it is run, of what an operating People's Forum is likely to do to public opinion some years in the future, on one issue - if it is not strongly affected by others. If

Deliberative Polls or other similar devices are deployed carefully for this forecasting function, they might produce effective publicity for the People's Forum, helping it to attract more voters, to generate more public deliberation and to exert more political influence. Deliberative mini-publics (statistically reliable samples of the population) could also assist a People's Forum by providing local, intensive sites of deliberation that contribute something to the broader development of public opinion, adding a little to the wisdom registered by the Forum. In return, People's Forums would assist the operation of such mini-publics by presenting state, national or global expressions of influential public opinion that they might be able to contribute to. Saward (2001) has proposed that cooperation between direct and deliberative democratic devices would improve democracy and Graham Smith (2005, 112) observes that if "different innovations are able to increase and deepen citizen participation in different ways, then the creative and imaginative combination or sequencing of democratic innovations has the potential to improve the effectiveness of citizen involvement in decision-making processes". Carolyn Hendriks (2006, 499, 502-3) sees this as a necessity for deliberative devices, because "unless a micro forum is closely connected to its macro discursive setting, then it risks drowning in a sea of other public conversations." She therefore advocates an "integrated system of public deliberation" in which "structured deliberative arenas work together with some of the more unconstrained, informal modes of deliberation operating in civil society". As the People's Forum has the potential to encourage very large numbers of people to simultaneously deliberate a large number of fundamental issues it may provide the basis of such an integrated system.

The People's Forum compared with principles for deliberative democracy and public management

As the People's Forum is a deliberative design, criteria for ensuring public deliberation in democratic government should help to indicate the Forum's potential to perform. Archon Fung and Erik Olin Wright (2003) have proposed such criteria in

the form of principles and “design properties” of “Empowered Participatory Governance” (EPG). Their first principle is a focus on practical problems and concrete concerns of society at local levels. The People’s Forum has this focus but only in an indirect way as it is designed for systemic treatment, which means attending to fundamental causes of problems. The other two principles of EPG are more easily recognized in the design of the Forum and call for deliberative democracy. They are: bottom-up participation and the deliberative generation of solutions. In addition to these three principles, the People’s Forum broadly follows the three “design properties” of EPG. The first of these, devolution of power, would not be to local bodies as in EPG, but would go further, to citizens. The second design property, centralized supervision and coordination, is basic to the Forum as this is what its managers would do. The third, a “state-centered” approach, to “colonize state power and transform formal governance institutions” (Fung and Wright 2003, 22) is a crucial feature of the People’s Forum, for if it proved effective its popular acceptance would urge the state to enact the policy trends that evolve in its poll results.

Peter Levine, Archon Fung and John Gastil (2005, 273-274) have observed that within the community of political theorists advocating deliberative innovations for democracy, there appears to be a broad agreement that any such device should:

1. have realistic expectations of political influence;
2. include key stakeholders and publics in deliberations;
3. foster informed, conscientious discussion working towards common ground;
4. use neutral, professional staff to help participants through a fair agenda;
5. earn broad public support for its recommendations;
6. be sustainable

They also note (Levine et al 2005, 274-277) that full consensus is often not possible but benefits flow from trying to develop it; that organization is vital; and that scale is important, i.e. scaling “out” to reach as much of the public as possible as well as scaling “up” to address concerns at strategic levels such as state, national and global. Levine, Fung and Gastil (2005, 238) stress

the importance of an open-minded, ongoing discovery of one another's possibly changing values and interests, which we call dynamic updating... participants in productive deliberation should continually and consciously update their understandings of common and conflicting interests as the process evolves.

The People's Forum appears to address all of these concerns to some degree. The specification of neutral, professional staff is met not by providing facilitators and expert advice on issues for panels of citizens, but by having the Forum's polls administered by professionally qualified staff who may consult with specialists on issues and on the content of the ballot paper, especially on the selection and description of issues, the selection of questions and the flagging of connections between different issues and questions.

David Ryfe (2005, 59, 57, 63-4) observes that deliberation by citizens is episodic, difficult and tentative; that it is driven by feelings of accountability, by high stakes and by diversity of views; and also that it is facilitated by rules, leadership and learning by deliberating with others who are skilled at it. The Forum appears to accommodate or use most of these responses. Its facilitation of deliberation by rules, by leadership, and by deliberating with those who have such skills is attempted by the presentation of a well designed ballot paper. Elizabeth Theiss-Morse and John Hibbing (2005, 243) emphasize that face-to face deliberation is difficult for the general public, mainly because many citizens are uncomfortable talking about policy, they lack interest in politics and they are busy doing other things that seem personally more relevant to them. They make this observation from numerous focus groups on politics that they have conducted around the US and from "a careful review of the empirical evidence [which] suggests that many people lack the motivation to engage in civic life generally and politics specifically... joining groups is not a way of embracing politics but a way of avoiding politics" (Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005, 244). The People's Forum is designed to cope with this reluctance by not relying on meetings of citizens; by using a poll to give incentives to think about issues; and by designing the ballot paper to assist deliberation.

Cass Sunstein has expressed concern that a tendency for people to discuss issues in like-minded groups or "enclaves" creates extreme views. He notes that the

individualization facilitated by wealth and technology divides communities because it helps people to associate with those who have similar views. For example, political blogs can create partisan communities who demonize each other. To prevent this, Sunstein (2002, 195) suggests:

The trick is to produce an institutional design that will increase the likelihood that deliberation will lead in sensible directions, so that any polarization, if it occurs, will be a result of learning, rather than group dynamics (2002, 188)... It is desirable to create spaces for enclave deliberation without insulating enclave members from those with opposing views, and without insulating those outside the enclave from the views of those within it.

The People's Forum would work against such insulation by publicizing poll results that show the differing views of citizens and some of their reasons for these. This would invite the public to debate and deliberate further, so that people may get closer to consensus and eventually come to agree that the majority should prevail.

A potential problem for any system of governance is the probability that incentive compatible devices (ICDs) will impair the cooperative dispositions of citizens (Orbell et al. 2004). ICDs are instruments such as laws or tax schemes that align the self-interest of the individual with the interest of the group. As the framing of choices by these devices obviates the need for citizens to invoke ethical concerns about public goods, these concerns may atrophy or their development may be neglected (Frohlich and Oppenheimer 1996). This makes the fostering of ethical individual responsibility and the improvement of collective welfare difficult to combine in formal institutions (Frohlich and Oppenheimer 2003). Democratic institutions should therefore not rely exclusively on ICDs. The People's Forum should not encounter this problem because it invites citizens to maintain and develop their social responsibility by devising and choosing ICDs. They would do this by contributing to the compilation of the ballot paper and by using the Forum's polls to express themselves and to hear each other.

Brian Head and John Alford (2008) report that research and practical experience in public management suggests that the social complexity of "wicked" problems requires that they be managed by wide-scale collaboration. They recommend that this be supported by a systems thinking and outcomes focus and also by "adaptive

leadership". Leadership scholar Ronald Heifetz (cited in Head and Alford 2008, 20-21) has described this as a "mobilizing of adaptive work" in which the public manager

leads organizational members and/or stakeholders *themselves* in doing the collective work of identifying the problem and developing ways to deal with it. In effect, those who are led are asked to perform the shared leadership role of setting a direction (emphasis in original).

So those who are led are asked to lead, by "setting a direction". This is the remedy suggested for democracies by the triple dysfunction hypothesis: that the people should become active and competent directors. The People's Forum is designed to assist them to do this by facilitating their collaborative communication. Head and Alford specify that such institutions must build trust and commitment in stakeholders and other parties: the Forum is designed to do this by being transparent, by being vulnerable to rejection by citizens and by making the execution of its policy recommendations contingent on a general level of acceptance, as discussed below in Chapter 7/ Elements of the design.../ 'Function 8'.

The People's Forum compared with other proposed deliberative designs

The People's Forum is now compared with three designs that are similar in purpose, as they are designed to influence strategic public policy with enlightened understanding by citizens across large scale democracies. Several other deliberative devices have much merit, but as they do not aim for this transferability they are not compared here with the Forum. Some of these are discussed in Chapter 9 as institutions that might be run in conjunction with the Forum for mutual benefit.

The comparison given below starts with descriptions of the three other designs. Each description ends with a list of the apparent capacities of that design to provide the goods defined above in 'Evaluating democratic institutions'. In these listings, my

ratings of these capacities are given in brackets after the name of each good, as was done above for the People's Forum at the end of 'Major functions...'. Also as done there, these ratings are on a scale of 0 (cannot provide that good) to 5 (extremely effective in providing that good). Readers may give ratings that differ from mine, according to their judgements of the effectiveness of a design. As emphasised above in 'Evaluating democratic institutions/ Evaluating goods of democratic institutions' these ratings are the extent to which the institution is assessed to generate a good for the whole polity, not the extent to which the institution generates them within itself.

Ratings are summed for each design to give a preliminary comparison of designs, as set out in Table 3, but this warrants further consideration as it assumes that all goods are of equal importance.

The Popular Branch

The Popular Branch was proposed by Ethan Leib (2004) as a mini-public that would enhance the representativeness and policy development of the US federal government. This institution would comprise 525 citizens compulsorily selected as a stratified random sample of all those US citizens who are eligible to vote and it would work in one location as 35 juries, each with 15 members also selected as stratified random samples (Leib 2004, 23) and which meet in plenary sessions to compare their deliberations. The Popular Branch would consider issues nominated by citizen-initiated referendums (CIR) that achieved a voter response of at least ten percent of the US electorate. Each issue would be deliberated for a few days with facilitation similar to that of the Deliberative Poll®, including the presentation of balanced information on the issue being dealt with. The findings of the Branch would become law, so its establishment would require amendment of the US Constitution.

It would appear that as the Popular Branch deals with one issue at a time, it may be limited to producing findings at rates that may be much slower than one issue a week, depending on the complexity of the issue. This may be a serious bottleneck and may produce flawed conclusions by deliberating some issues before fully considering others that are strongly related to them. Another problem is the need for

political will to establish and maintain the Branch. Leib (2004, 135) hopes that this would develop through citizens and politicians experiencing events such as Deliberative Polls®, but he concedes “it is hard to expect politicians, who often feel they don’t have enough power, to delegate it back to the people”.

Institutional goods

As the structured deliberation of the Popular Branch means that only one issue can be deliberated at a time, the agenda of issues to be deliberated in a given period, say a year, is a matter of public contention that calls for popular control, so CIR is to be used to select the issues to be treated. This limits *efficiency* (3) as CIR is very expensive: it now costs more than US\$1 million to place a measure on a CIR ballot in California (Lupia and Matsusaka 2004). Leib’s design is based on the assumption that strictly representative samples deliberating in a structured manner are essential for enhancing democracy, a view that has also been expressed by James Fishkin and Cynthia Farrar (2005, 77). “The most significant challenge ahead is to find ways to adapt, institutionalize, and take the deliberative poll to scale while preserving its defining elements.” These elements include a large random sample of citizens and their systematic exposure to different points of view.

Random sampling creates a difficulty with *transparency* (2) that may produce low to moderate transferability to democratic polities: the people may not have faith in deliberations from which the vast majority of them are excluded. Deliberation must take place at lower as well as at elite levels in order to develop not only laws and policies, but the attitudes and opinions that are needed to sustain them (Smith 2003, 86). If fundamental changes in law and policy are to be supported over the long run by citizens, then those who choose to take an interest must be able to understand these changes and have an opportunity to influence them. John Parkinson notes this problem of legitimacy in schemes such as Leib’s and calls for

us to loosen the tight institutional restrictions some early theorists had inadvertently imposed on deliberative designs, allowing us to think about legitimacy as being created across multiple deliberative moments in a wider deliberative system... involving many more people in deliberative democracy than any one micro-deliberative process could

ever manage, even though not all of them can deliberate in the technical sense (Parkinson 2006, 174).

Another problem for transferability is a lack of *feasibility* (1) of introduction that arises from the need for political will to establish the Popular Branch.

The restriction to one issue at a time is also likely to prevent transferability to fundamental, *strategic issues* (1), because issues that are strongly related may be overlooked. Causes may be neglected through a preoccupation with symptoms that are more apparent or urgent. The selection of agenda items by CIR may entrench this deficit in transferability by not providing enough public deliberation of the selection and sequencing of items on the agenda. Competent strategic policy may also depend on altering popular values and priorities, in which case the exclusion of citizens by the sampling that selects the members of the Branch will impede or block progress.

The Branch is designed for *large-scale* (4) national government.

Participatory goods

The random sampling of the Popular Branch virtually excludes opportunities for all citizens to *communicate their views to each other* (1) on the matter being dealt with. It also excludes opportunities for all citizens to *vote on policy* (0). In addition to deficits in efficiency and transferability, another effect of the financial cost of CIR would be to limit opportunities for popular *control of the agenda* (2). *Inclusion* (4) of all socio-economic, ethnic, cultural and other groups should be fairly well achieved by the stratification of the random sample.

Governmental goods

Opportunities for all citizens to gain an *enlightened understanding* (1) of the issues being dealt with are largely absent. The governmental good of the political influence of *informed citizen opinion prevailing* (2) over that of less informed citizen opinion would be provided by the Popular Branch, but this good would be limited, possibly severely, by the transferability difficulty it would have with fundamental issues, so

that this 'informed' random sample may not be able to become very well informed on some crucial issues.

The governmental good of *defence against manipulation* (1) of the public interest is suggested to be deficient because of the likelihood that the special interests who manipulate the actions of elected representatives could also influence the politics of randomly selected representatives. Both types of representatives are a very small fraction of the electorate, so it is feasible for special interest operatives to influence how they vote and who attains leadership positions within their assemblies. As journalist Jonathan Rauch (cited in Snider 2007, 4) observes, random sample panels "won't be insulated from politics but will be insulated from accountability." *Popular implementation* (4) is assured by the legal power of the Branch, if this is interpreted as a Constitutional expression of popular support for the Branch and its findings. However, the restricted ability of the Popular Branch to handle many issues may interfere with this.

The People's House

Kevin O'Leary (2006) proposes a deliberative improvement of American national government through a much larger sample of 435 deliberating groups called local citizen assemblies, each of which has 100 randomly selected citizens who choose to accept the role. Members are limited to two year terms and each assembly would represent a congressional ward in addition to its current representation by a member of the House of Representatives. Local citizen assemblies would conduct their business face-to-face, two or three evenings a month and they would be linked by internet, so that together they form a decentralized national "Assembly" of 43,500 delegates. In its first stage of development, as envisaged by O'Leary, this Assembly would not have formal power but its deliberations and votes could inform Congress and the president. The agenda for the Assembly would be set by a national steering committee of 50 people randomly selected for a two year term from 435 candidates, each of whom is nominated from each of the 435 citizen assemblies. Agenda items would be selected from the Congressional legislative program, with a focus on bills passed either by the House of Representatives or by the Senate and awaiting

ratification by the other. As the whole national Assembly would have to deal with each legislative proposal at the same time, it would deal with a very restricted number of these each year.

Stage two of O'Leary's proposal is the People's House, which is the national Assembly after it is empowered by constitutional amendment to help set the legislative agenda and to have the capacity to veto bills passed by the House of Representatives or the Senate. The House and the Senate could each override a People's House veto with a 60 per cent vote. The People's House would also have the "gate-opening" power

to force a floor vote on certain bills heretofore stuck in committee and destined to die. Other positive powers include the authority to initiate bills in either the House or the Senate, the power to offer amendments to bills under consideration on the floor of the House or the Senate, the ability to pass formal instructions to individual representatives, and the right to draft at-large resolutions addressed to the House of Representatives or the Senate as a whole (O'Leary 2006, 8).

The members of the citizen assemblies would receive \$100 per month for their contributions and the 50 members of the steering committee would each be paid \$75,000 per annum as their work would be a demanding and crucial job that may require full time commitment (O'Leary, 2006, 159). This salary would also help "to assure the integrity and honesty of these delegates when they are the focus of lobbying efforts by various interest groups" (O'Leary, 2006, 249ⁿ³²). Additional costs would cover the employment of 25 technical and administrative staff.

O'Leary (2006, 113-126) summarizes the mission of the People's House as giving a voice to the public, curbing the excessive influence of special interests, providing the public with a mechanism for breaking legislative deadlock and producing a fairer aggregation of electors' preferences. Although the People's House is designed as an addition to the US system, it should be adaptable to other democracies, including parliamentary types and those with multi-member electorates.

Institutional goods

The People's House design provides some *efficiency* (3) in that its total financial cost of perhaps \$50 million per annum is spread among all citizens (O'Leary 2006, 159), but it may lack efficiency by frustrating legislators, as discussed below under governmental goods. However, as noted there this inefficiency may produce a governmental good. Another problem for efficiency may be that each prospective member of the national Assembly/ People's House is unlikely to have the incentive to "give up a good portion of their lives to seriously grapple with public policy issues" (Snider 2007, 4) when they are only paid \$100 per month and are merely one voice among 43,500.

Transferability to democratic political systems will be limited by a lack of *transparency* (3) from random sampling, but this may be compensated to some extent by the large number of representatives making them fairly accessible to citizens. Another limited transferability item is that the *feasibility* (2) of introduction of the People's House depends on the development of the political will to create the legislation to establish the Assembly and then to amend the Constitution to transform it into the House. O'Leary (2006, 130-32) suggests that this problem could be overcome by introducing the system in just a few states, to start to develop a national political will for the Assembly. But even an introduction on this scale requires political will that may not be possible to generate (Gastil, 2007, 646).

Transferability in respect of *strategic issues* (2) may be restricted because the Assembly/People's House cannot deal simultaneously with a multitude of issues. This is likely to cause crucial interconnections between issues to be neglected, including examinations by citizens of their priorities and values. The national steering committee can only place on the agenda those issues that all 435 local citizen assemblies could consider as a national Assembly or as a People's House in a period of a few months or a year, so a very restricted number of issues will be attended to annually. The tendency of the People's House to focus on the current legislative program of Congress reinforces this effect. Furthermore, the random sampling of the House will do little to facilitate such deliberation across the demos. The People's House may therefore be rather blinkered, disjointed and inflexible in its

deliberations. Symptoms of issues may therefore be attended to while fundamental causes are ignored. Any such confusion of priorities in deliberation may limit the development of public opinion and culture, blocking the enactment of reforms that could work. This effect of random sampling is also noted below as producing a deficit in the governmental good of opportunities for citizens to gain enlightened understanding. In contrast to this deficit, however, transferability to *large scale* (4) national governments appears quite practicable.

Participatory goods

The Assembly/People's House would provide some increased opportunity for all citizens to *communicate their views to each other* (3) because the very large sample of 43,500 would attract public attention to their deliberations. This large number of representatives would also give citizens more access to them, which should motivate citizens to communicate their views on policy, to both representatives and other citizens. Opportunities for all citizens to *vote on policy* (0) would be little affected by this design. Opportunities for all citizens to *control the agenda* (2) are limited as their input must pass through the People's House and then through the 50-member National Steering Committee, which is largely restricted to helping Congress set the agenda. *Full inclusion* (4) of social groups should be achieved by the very large sample.

Governmental goods

As noted above, because the Assembly/ People's House design does not invite all electors to actively participate, it is unlikely to encourage many citizens to think about issues. It also does not attempt to facilitate such thinking on a mass scale. This deficit of opportunities for *enlightened understanding* (2) is likely to mean that the quality of the legislation and public policy that elected politicians can produce with the assistance of the Assembly/ People's House is somewhat limited. The same defect is predicted above for the Popular Branch, but the People's House should not perform as badly as Leib's system in this respect due to its much more widespread presence in the community. Any such disconnect between the deliberated views of

the People's House and mass public opinion may cause the veto power of the People's House to frustrate legislators because they largely represent mass opinion. This frustration may be wearing for legislators, despite their ability to overrule the People's House with a 60 per cent supermajority vote, but the political struggles borne of this institutional inefficiency may produce two governmental goods. The first is some stimulation of public debate and education about the issues involved, which is taken into account by the rating of 2 suggested above for *enlightened understanding*. The second governmental good is some demonstration to citizens that their politicians should defer to the deliberations of the People's House because it represents public interests more competently than the mass of citizens can manage via the political influence of their often ill-informed public opinion. This is assessed as giving the House a little of the governmental good of the political influence of *informed citizen opinion prevailing* over that of less informed opinion (2).

The governmental good of *defence against manipulation* (2) should not be as acutely deficient as is anticipated for the much smaller number of members of the Popular Branch. Even so, the members of the People's House may be limited enough in numbers, at 43,500, to enable the operatives of special interests to manipulate some outcomes (Rauch cited in Snider 2007, 4). *Popular implementation* (4) is assured by the legal power of the House, if this is interpreted as a Constitutional expression of popular support for the House and its findings. However, the inability of the People's House to handle a large number of issues in a given period may restrict this.

Pyramidal democracy

In contrast to these suggested mini-public additions to current representative systems, a radical change has been recently and independently suggested by Stephen Shalom (2005) and Marcus Pivato (2009). Shalom calls this political system ParPolity. Pivato calls it pyramidal democracy and points out that it was discussed as early as the seventeenth century and a three tier version is currently used for participatory budgeting in many cities in Brazil. Pyramidal democracy is intended to completely replace current democratic state and national governments with up to

seven tiers of popular assemblies in which each tier is composed of representatives from the tier below. All citizens in a nation are invited to attend an assembly or “node” (Pivato 2009) in the primary tier and each node would elect one member to represent it at similar sized nodes in the second tier, which would likewise elect representatives to nodes in the third tier and so on, up to the supreme node at the top, which forms the government and would differ from the other nodes in being much larger, with say 100 members. Shalom envisages that this system of “nested councils” would have 25-50 citizens in each council or node, while Pivato’s preference is for a minimum of seven and a maximum of ten citizens in each. These size restrictions are intended to facilitate interpersonal deliberation, whether face-to-face or online, but large size would minimize the number of tiers. The mathematics of this system is that seven tiers could serve a nation with 100 million citizens, if all nodes comprised 10 citizens or representatives, even if there were no age or other restrictions on eligibility to participate. Nine tiers of 10 member nodes could represent ten billion people. If only one person in six were interested in participating in the primary tier, then eight tiers might govern the current population of the planet in this way.

Pyramidal democracy offers face-to-face or online deliberative participation to all citizens, at least at the primary level and for many citizens at higher levels. Each representative is accountable to the node she represents, which can replace her at any time by electing another. Pivato specifies that node membership would be voluntary, with citizens choosing to enter a particular node according to ideological affinity, whereas Shalom envisages geographical proximity as the determinant, to enable face-to-face deliberation. Node members would be free to choose whether to accept a new member, to expel a current member and to replace their representative in the tier above them. The operation of nodes on the basis of ideological affinity would be facilitated by deliberation conducted online and by email, blogs or other types of ‘virtual forum’. Representatives in the upper tiers will have to handle many issues so their work would be full time, requiring commensurate payment. These people will be very competent as their ascent through each tier will be based on personal assessments of their dedication and ability by fellow members of the nodes

they have worked in. Pivato points out that this makes pyramidal democracy meritocratic, as well as being deliberative and accountable to all citizens via the chain of communication in which representatives report back to the nodes they represent. He also points out the possibility that ‘cascades’ of representative replacements or defections could propagate up the pyramid, causing it to become unstable or collapse, but he shows that this could be prevented by constitutional provisions of mandatory waiting periods for replacing representatives, for allowing new ones to start voting, for allowing them to defect, for allowing defectors to start voting in new nodes and for nodes that have less than the minimum number of members to regain their minimum size.

Shalom’s design appears to use the geographical basis of membership of nodes to provide a pyramid that covers local and provincial affairs in its lower tiers and national or wider affairs in its upper levels. He recommends that his version has a “High Council Court” of 41 citizens chosen by lot for staggered two year terms, to prevent majority decisions unjustifiably harming minorities. A system of Lesser Council Courts for each tier above the primary level would be needed to judge whether an issue should be decided at a higher level or not. As Pivato’s concept is for nodes to form around ideological interests it may require separate pyramids for local, state (provincial), national and global issues. Attending more than one of these pyramids might make the citizen’s task too onerous or unfocused so they may choose to specialize in just one level of government. Coordination of policies between these levels and pyramids may cause problems. With Shalom’s version, citizens interested in the broader policy of higher level tiers may find it difficult to start deliberating such national or global policy in primary level nodes as these may be focused on local issues. While Shalom’s system appears confusing for citizens, Pivato’s may also overload them with the problems of coordinating the policy work of different pyramids.

Pyramidal democracy needs a clearer formulation and the following assessment is merely a preliminary attempt to evaluate Pivato’s version. The ratings given for its goods are therefore to be treated as especially questionable.

Institutional goods

Pyramidal democracy will lack *efficiency* (3) by demanding much time from citizens, but this problem may be alleviated to some extent by this system eliminating the expense of the formal apparatus of electoral democracy, together with electoral campaigning and advisors for politicians. Most professional lobbying may be converted from spin and trading favours to providing information for node members, because the large numbers of enquiring and deliberating citizens may become quite discerning about the type and quality of information that they use.

Pivato's system may have a deficit of transferability to democracies if its long chains of responsibility impair *transparency* (2) for those at the bottom. These chains may be further complicated by the need to coordinate policy between three or four pyramids. Low *feasibility* (1) of introduction is another transferability problem because this system requires broad community or political will to introduce it. Pivato suggests this may be developed by implementing the pyramidal system in an incremental, experimental manner that should educate citizens about its potential and prevent failure of governance at large scales by uncovering flaws before the pyramid is applied to regional or national government. He sees the political will for pyramidal democracy as starting in "micropolities" such as student groups, private clubs and professional associations. However such groups show no sign of wanting the complexity of the chains of representation of multi-tiered pyramids. Perhaps the narrow focus of their interests makes this unnecessary.

Another transferability problem is that long chains of responsibility may prevent pyramids from considering enough policy problems in a given period to enable them to be competent on *strategic issues* (1). This could be a crucial flaw, for as pointed out above, many issues are interrelated and therefore should be deliberated in a coordinated manner, such as simultaneously, or in a specific sequence and also with feedback that helps citizens to update their thinking as their opinions on related issues are developed. In order to deliberate fundamental issues, nodes may have to follow an agenda that applies to a whole pyramid and probably across more than one pyramid. This would enable upper tier nodes to introduce topics to all lower tiers when upper level deliberations reveal needs for the grassroots to consider

questions they have overlooked, such as citizens having to pay more tax or change other expectations in order to enable the implementation of new policy that may be identified and favoured by an upper tier.

This system is potentially transferable to *large scale* (5) national, multinational or global polities, but whether the long chains of delegation, together with communication between pyramids, are able to produce accountability seems questionable and this is registered above in the low transparency rating.

Participatory goods

Pyramidal democracy would give citizens more opportunity to *communicate their views* (3) to other citizens across the polity than electoral democratic systems. This effect would be through communication within nodes and it would also occur between tiers and then across tiers as representatives report views up to the next one and then back down to nodes in lower tiers for deliberation. These effects would be supported by nodes in upper tiers publicizing policy problems, because these groups would be professionally remunerated and would have the time and facilities to do this. However, communication between pyramids might confuse citizens with too much information.

Citizens have restricted opportunity to *vote on policy* (3), as voting for all citizens is limited to their participation in either a primary level node or a higher tier node as a representative. Representatives can only vote in the node where they represent a lower tier node: they cannot vote in the node they represent. The long chains of responsibility may create difficulties for *popular control of the agenda* (3). Voluntary membership of nodes, together with the obligation to attend meetings, may prevent *full inclusion* (3) of all socio-economic and other groups, despite the freedom of each node to form around interests that its members have in common. Experience with the truncated three-tiered pyramid of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre indicates that inclusion will not be achieved in each pyramid as nodes that deliberate strategic or high level jurisdiction issues will tend to be dominated by politically active middle class citizens (G. Smith 2009, 69-70).

Governmental goods

Membership of nodes may provide opportunities for all citizens to gain *enlightened understanding* (3) that are limited by the small size of these groups. Polarization is likely when they form around common interests. This may happen in the lower tiers and produce standoffs in upper tiers so their members vote rather than deliberate. Pivato (2009, 19) anticipates that such clash of views would counter polarization as representatives report back to their nodes in subordinate tiers but this reciprocating process may be too time-consuming and indirect for much educational effect and could discourage participation. Nodes at the lower levels may be too short-lived or changeable to be able to make well considered judgements and to be consistent in their decisions. This could make it difficult for higher tier members to represent lower tiers.

The meritocratic function of pyramidal democracy enables the political influence of *informed citizen opinion to prevail* over that of less-informed citizen opinion (4). The likely problem of lack of transferability to strategic issues may limit the value of this effect by restricting the quality of informed opinion, but this is registered by the low rating given to this class of transferability. The potential for very large numbers of participants assists *defence against manipulation* (4) because it makes manipulation potentially very expensive and increases the probability that it will be exposed to public censure by the many citizens that are trying to contribute constructively as members of pyramids. *Popular control of the implementation* (4) of policy decisions should be very good, due to the broad and continuing base of citizen participation that the pyramid encourages. This would apply to both popular support for policy and its effective implementation. However the complexity of having many tiers and several pyramids may mean that a lack of transparency and deficiencies in participation goods might limit the extent to which this control is popular.

Comparing the four designs

The ratings that have been suggested above for anticipated provisions of goods, including those anticipated to be provided by the People's Forum, are compared below in Table 3. As indicated above, these ratings and also the evaluative

Table 3

A preliminary comparison of the anticipated abilities of four institutional designs to facilitate large scale deliberative democratic government in respect of strategic issues

Goods	Institutional design			
	Popular branch	People's House	Pyramidal democracy	People's Forum
	<i>Added to electoral democracy</i>	<i>Added to electoral democracy</i>	<i>Replacing electoral democracy</i>	<i>Added to electoral democracy</i>
	<i>Compulsory random sample</i>	<i>Random sample with role acceptance</i>	<i>Self-selection open to all citizens</i>	<i>Self-selection open to all citizens</i>
Institutional				
<i>Efficiency</i>	3	3	3	4
<i>Transferability</i>				
<i>Transparency</i>	2	3	2	4
<i>Feasibility of introduction</i>	1	2	1	3
<i>Type of issue (strategic)</i>	1	2	1	4
<i>Scale (large)</i>	4	4	5	5
Participatory				
<i>Communication</i>	1	3	3	3
<i>Voting</i>	0	0	3	4
<i>Agenda control</i>	2	2	3	4
<i>Full inclusion</i>	4	4	3	1
Governmental				
<i>Enlightened understanding</i>	1	2	3	2
<i>Informed opinion prevails</i>	2	2	4	4
<i>Defence against manipulation</i>	1	2	4	4
<i>Popular implementation</i>	4	4	4	3
Total w/o feasibility of int.	25	31	38	42
Total goods	26	33	39	45

(Abilities are termed 'goods' and subjectively assessed on a scale of 0-5)

framework into which they are inserted are not intended to be the last word, but are presented for alteration or endorsement. Two sets of total scores are given in the table, one that is complete and the other with feasibility ratings omitted to compare the apparent potential effectiveness of designs without the complication of considering whether they could actually be established as functioning institutions.

In addition to the People's Forum registering in this assessment as the most promising of the four designs, another feature is higher effectiveness for the two designs that rely on self-selected participation. The remaining two that use random sample participation rate as less effective due mainly to lower prospects for participatory and governmental goods. It would be appropriate to add a design based on sortition to this comparison, as this could have a purpose similar to the others: that of deliberatively developing strategic policy for large scale democracies. Sortition could provide intensive deliberation because the members of the representative body would be assisted to frankly and freely exchange views and information by the absence of electoral pressures and their limited numbers of perhaps up to a thousand members. However, this deliberative potential may be distorted by manipulation from special interests, a problem that also occurs with random sampling for the Popular Branch and the People's House. Furthermore, as intensive deliberation is confined to representatives it may not transfer much *enlightened understanding* to citizens. Although sortition is not entered into this table, its *feasibility* of introduction should also be noted. A sortition-based government is likely to rate very low on this transferability good, as it would replace electorally representative types and thereby run into a lack of political will for its introduction. This means that if the ratings total for goods, excluding feasibility of introduction, that is assessed for sortition indicates it should be trialled, then this would require another innovation with higher feasibility of introduction to be implemented first, in order to establish a new form of government that is more capable of considering whether it should reform or replace itself. Such consideration might use the comparative framework of Table 3.

Perspectives on the promise of the People's Forum

The promising result for the People's Forum in Table 3 may be exaggerated by the functions of the Forum being inspected more closely than for the other three systems. Apart from this possibility, other assessors might prefer to allocate different ratings that give a less optimistic view of the Forum. However, a basic cause for its good showing may be the importance of the two strategies that it would employ to try to improve democratic government: helping mass public opinion to develop and inviting the public to give political influence to that section of its opinion that is most likely to be well developed. The design of pyramidal democracy would also execute these two strategies and this may explain its second-place ranking in Table 3, whereas the lower ranking Popular Branch and People's House are not as strongly designed for these purposes.

The second strategy of the Forum is necessary because, as discussed in Chapter 2, public disengagement usually makes the development of mass public opinion very slow. Diana Mutz describes some of this disengagement as people trying to avoid risking their relationships, which means that it

is questionable whether conversation alone is the best route to exposing people to oppositional political views... Deliberative theorists... have not gone so far as to suggest in concrete terms how people might interact with one another in mixed company, and yet simultaneously pursue active lives as political citizens... Clearly not all citizens feel they can speak their minds freely without repercussions for their public or private lives. And yet the goal of reducing risks, both individual and collective, is an extremely valuable one that has yet to be incorporated into political theory or practical politics (Mutz 2006, 144, 149, 151).

Both the People's Forum and pyramidal democracy are suggestions "in concrete terms", as to how citizens could minimize collective risks by conducting more active political lives that also minimize individual risks. These designs would do this by encouraging "diverse networks", as advocated by Mutz (2006, 150). "Only when... [we have] the ability to build and maintain diverse networks, and to evaluate and

promote ideas through them – will the metaphor of a marketplace of political ideas ring true for American political culture.” In considering innovations in governance, Mark Moore and Jean Hartley (2008, 19) state that “the most important problem facing the public is discovering itself and identifying its own true interests. We argue that this challenge will only be solved by more practice with, and innovation in, the processes of democratic deliberation itself.” A similar view is given by Ian Marsh as he discusses a perceived decline of democratic governance in Australia. He recommends that renewal requires a

richer or more elaborated public conversation about policy frameworks. In turn, this requires an institutional structure capable of mediating the strategic or agenda entry phase of the issue cycle... Further, this phase must be located in the mainstream of the political drama... [and not be] automatically subordinate to the will of the executive (Marsh 2005, 38).

Marsh (2007, 336) later observed that “A serious impact on the quality of political deliberation requires institutional change. But this needs to occur in the power structures that frame its core dynamics, not in an irrelevant periphery.” Of the four institutions assessed in Table 2, the People’s Forum and pyramidal democracy are arguably the most strongly “located in the mainstream of the political drama” and in “the power structures that frame... core dynamics” as they are designed to work with mass public opinion.

Although Table 3 shows the Forum as the most promising of the four designs surveyed, it does not indicate whether it would actually work. This depends on whether it is recognized and strongly endorsed by the mass public. Its potential to deliver institutional, participatory and governmental goods indicates that it could generate such support, but whether this is achieved is likely to depend on whether the Forum is well publicised and whether it is well managed and run for a long enough period to develop wide public recognition of its capacity to deliver the goods.

CHAPTER 7

Design elements of the People's Forum.

This chapter describes the proposed structure of the People's Forum in a more detailed manner than Chapter 6, to give more perspective on whether it is likely to function effectively. The five major functions of the Forum that were previously outlined are replaced here with twelve more specific functions. These are listed below and are intended to produce the major five functions as well as others. The ways in which these twelve functions would perform the five major functions are indicated by the notation MF_x, where x is the order of appearance of the major function in the previous chapter; that is, 1 for 'public deliberation – open, slow and in some ways careful consideration by citizens'; 2 'deliberating what is to be deliberated'; 3 'examining basics'; 4 'an element of meritocracy'; and 5 'economizing citizen effort'.

The more detailed explanation in this chapter necessarily repeats much of the description in Chapter 6 and to be systematic, repeats information that is relevant to more than one of the twelve functions. In the following list of these functions, those intended to assist the Forum's strategy of developing public opinion are indicated by (So) and those that should contribute to the meritocratic strategy of producing political influence for opinions that are likely to be relatively well developed are indicated by (Sm). As this chapter aims at description rather than evaluation, it makes limited reference to institutional, participatory and governmental goods.

Functions of the People's Forum

1. Presenting a forum for the public to debate and discuss (MF1) fundamental, long-running issues (MF3) (So).
2. Being open and easily accessible to the whole electorate, so that the deliberation fostered by the poll is widespread (MF1) and all electors, including politically alienated or marginalized groups, find it easy to vote (So).
3. Assisting citizens to indicate the specific responses they want their government to make to the issues covered (So).
4. Indicating when the people have reached a stable set of views on an issue after extensive public discussion and voting (MF1) (So).
5. Developing political influence for the public opinion expressed in People's Forum polls (Sm).
6. Developing this political influence as or after, but not before, opinion develops into a stable public judgment (Sm).
7. Reserving political influence (on issues dealt with by the People's Forum) for those who have thought about these issues (MF4) (Sm).
8. Inviting the public to review its opinion on an issue, as expressed in People's Forum polls, before the political influence of these polls causes that opinion to become policy or law (MF1) (So, Sm).
9. Minimizing the ability of powerful narrow interests to distort the development of public opinion and voting in People's Forum polls (MF1) (So, Sm).
10. Developing the political will for difficult political decisions to be executed (Sm).
11. Offering a capacity for citizens to initiate and run the People's Forum poll without government assistance and funding, if these are difficult to obtain (So, Sm).
12. Developing the confidence of the people in the People's Forum, so they and their representatives will maintain and use it. This includes a capacity for the public to set the agenda (MF2, MF5) (So, Sm).

Function 11 is designed to get the poll going and, along with Function 12, to keep it running.

Elements of the design of the People's Forum and how they should produce its twelve functions

The People's Forum is intended to produce its twelve functions largely through the influence of the following 22 elements (E) of its design.

Elements of the People's Forum design

- E1 A reference document to facilitate deliberation and voting by the public (the agenda or 'ballot paper').
- E2 Agenda contributions from citizens.
- E3 Voluntary voting which is self-selecting, not randomly selected.
- E4 Regular repetition of the poll (posing substantially the same questions each time, probably annually).
- E5 Demonstrating trends in the development of the opinion of the participating public.
- E6 Feedback: relaying voters' opinions back to the public to stimulate deliberation and future participation in the poll.
- E7 Accessibility: all electors eligible; voting by phone and internet; personal identification available for voting on impulse; a week for voting; media coverage before/ during/ after voting.
- E8 Focus: the voluntary nature of the poll extends to the voter having the freedom to focus on only those issues and only those questions that he or she wants to.
- E9 Dealing with long-running, fundamental issues.
- E10 Wide-ranging menu of issues.
- E11 Investigating connections between issues.

- E12 Searching for solutions to causes rather than for treatments of symptoms.
- E13 Questions on attitude, justification and action.
- E14 The solidarity exchange: eliciting willingness to pay for solutions.
- E15 Competition between rival People's Forum polls, to satisfy the public.
- E16 Report cards: ratings for politicians and parties, mainly on how closely the actions of each reflect the trends of the People's Forum poll.
- E17 Advisory influence: poll results are not binding on the legislature.
- E18 Executive review: opportunity for the public to reverse voting trends before these trends change the law or government policy.
- E19 Defence against manipulation (of public opinion and voting) by narrow interests.
- E20 Incentives for participation by the public in democratic government – including motivations for voting and for deliberating the questions posed.
- E21 Ability to privately finance the People's Forum: especially for its introduction to the electorate.
- E22 Voting security.

The ways in which these design elements are expected to produce the twelve functions of the People's Forum are now explained, for each function in turn.

Function 1: Presenting a forum for the public to debate and discuss fundamental, long-running issues

E1 A reference document to facilitate deliberation and voting: the ballot paper

The 'ballot paper' would not only be a tool for lodging votes, but a framework for helping citizens to think issues through. It would provide a standing agenda, in hardcopy and online, of key questions on important issues. This agenda would be compiled by the managers of the poll, with input from the public as discussed below in Function 12/ 'E3' and 'E2'. For each issue, a concise description would provide information as impartially as possible, including the major pros and cons. Questions

are then posed, each with a range of answers for the voter's choice. The ballot paper may note sources of information on the issues it polls and the on-line version may give active links to relevant references. Some of this work has been done for many years for small groups that deliberate face-to-face, for example in the US by the Kettering Foundation's National Issues Forums and by the Paul J. Aicher Foundation's Everyday Democracy. In Australia, more than 250 small books have been produced by Issues in Society (Healey 2005), each dealing with one public issue. These organisations concentrate on presenting information for discussion, but the People's Forum would usually restrict itself to very little of this in order to focus on posing the most significant questions, some of which would invite respondents to explicitly state or re-examine the value system they use in making their choices.

The ballot paper would give instructions on how to vote by phone and internet and how to have input into the management of the poll. New editions of the ballot paper may be published annually and, if necessary, a few issues or questions may be dropped, replaced or augmented each time - but only if necessary. The intention is to have an annual vote on each question for many years, to encourage extended public debate and informal deliberation on each one. This continuity should help citizens gather relevant information and carefully consider issues that interest them. The ballot paper would try (as explained in Function 12/ 'E3' below) to present menus of issues, questions and answers that are relevant, comprehensive, competent and balanced.

As a mechanism to facilitate deliberative participation in democratic government, the ballot paper conforms to John Dryzek's (2000, 162) stipulation that "authenticity of deliberation requires that communication must induce reflection upon preferences in non-coercive fashion." The ballot paper merely invites and assists this form of participation. It might be expected that the Forum's process of individuals voting in a secret ballot would allow the expression of narrow self-interest, but experience with Citizen Assemblies and deliberative opinion polls indicates that the secret vote does not prevent public spirited judgements (G. Smith 2009, 97-8). Those two types of panel consider public goods with face-to-face meetings that are informed by experts and carefully moderated, but the People's Forum should achieve a public

goods focus with its ballot paper questions and by allowing several years for these to be publicly addressed by technical experts, interest groups and concerned citizens.

Dalton (2004, 146, 151) observes that in the past several decades, expanding concerns of citizens have raised so many new issues that

in a multidimensional policy space a government can satisfy most of the people some of the time, or some people most of the time, but not most of the people most of the time... [There is] strong evidence that this factor contributes to the public's growing frustration with their government... It is not so much that governments produce less, but that citizens expect more.

The People's Forum ballot paper is intended to assist citizens to take up much of the extra work that they now expect from government. It would respond to "a lack of institutions and processes that can aggregate and balance divergent interests into coherent policy programmes that the participants can accept" (Dalton 2004, 205).

The treatment of issues by the ballot paper will require much expert knowledge and would therefore be costly. For the introductory phase of a People's Forum, the number of issues it lists may be restricted to perhaps fifty or so of the most urgent types, but as the Forum operated its agenda would be expanded (see Function 12/E10 below). This would increase not only the appeal of the poll to a wider range of citizens, but the ability of the ballot paper to draw the attention of voters to important relationships between issues that they should consider before finalizing their vote.

E3 Voluntary voting

It may seem superfluous to specify voluntary voting as a design element, because the usual assumption is that voting is voluntary, even in the case of the random selection of conventional opinion polling. Voluntary voting is specified partly to focus on the importance of self-selective sampling rather than random sampling for this poll and also to help distinguish this system from other voting events such as in Australia where referendums may be held together with elections as a compulsory vote.

As discussed below (mainly under Functions 3, 5, 7, 8 and 12), egoistic and solidary predispositions will drive interest groups, activists and others to want their points of view to look good in the poll results. Voluntary voting gives citizens more incentive to compete with each other for this goal, for it puts them in the position of not only wanting to persuade others to vote their way, but also wanting to persuade them to vote. Such tension or competition should help to raise the profile of the poll, provoking the community into more debate on the issues it presents, thereby motivating people to educate each other and also themselves as they seek to develop their arguments or, alternatively, to review their attitudes.

E4 Repetition

The People's Forum polling event is to be held at regular, preset, well publicised intervals, say once a year, asking the same questions each time. One vote by a respondent may comprise answers to any questions on any number of the issues presented. The repetition of questions on each issue run in the poll would allow years for debate, which should assist public opinion to develop. Debate may be stimulated as people become aware that they have time to convince others of their views and thus to influence future poll results. Repetition would invite the proportion of the electorate voting on any issue to increase, as people see the event recur and become tempted to debate and vote. Matthew Mendelsohn and Andrew Parkin (2001, 20) argue that repetitive referendums could produce a "public brokerage" that fosters deliberation. In reviewing constitutional referendums, Simone Chambers (2001, 251) also advocates this approach for effective deliberation and the legitimacy of the ultimate outcome. It is noted by Arthur Lupia and John Matsusaka (2004) that even without repetition, referenda stimulate citizens to increase their political knowledge, to donate campaign contributions to interest groups and to vote. These responses occur even among the most poorly informed segments of the electorate.

The fostering of deliberation by repetition should help chronic problems to be tackled until they are minimized. One such issue is the alienation of citizens from civic engagement. Although these people may not be stimulated by the repetition of

polling to join in as voters, others who do vote may be able to provoke constructive policy action on alienation and its effects, through their engagement with the Forum. Such “de facto representation of the shy and disinterested by the articulate and engaged” is common in direct-democratic assemblies such as New England town hall meetings (Brown 2006, 211-12) and might also be expected in the People’s Forum because of its repetition and other features designed to foster deliberation. The importance of alienation is emphasized by Martin Gilens (2005, 778), who finds that in American democracy

actual policy outcomes strongly reflect the preferences of the most affluent but bear virtually no relationship to the preferences of poor or middle-income Americans. The vast discrepancy... stands in stark contrast to the ideal of political equality that Americans hold dear... representational biases of this magnitude call into question the very democratic character of our society.

E6 Feedback

Each annual poll is to be spread over a week with television and other media coverage of the progress of the voting on the most topical issues each evening. This should provoke reactions from the public to the trends in polling, sharpening interest in the poll and its issues and encouraging more to vote before that poll closes. Such promotion of the People’s Forum should encourage debate among citizens through current channels such as the electronic and print media, books, schools, universities and talk between friends, thereby helping public opinion on the Forum’s questions to develop between polls. A discussion with the manager of a local television station on the feasibility of week-long media coverage of People’s Forum polling has indicated that this may be undertaken by the media as a part of their coverage of news and current affairs.

E7 Accessibility

The extent to which the People’s Forum helps to develop mass public opinion and also its achievement of political influence will both depend to some extent on the number of people who are attracted to participate. Voting by telephone and internet

would therefore be employed to make participation as quick and convenient as possible. A central computer would receive all voting calls, which are made by keying code numbers on phones or by selecting answers offered on the poll website. Other elements aiding accessibility are noted under Function 2 below. The 'digital divide' tends to exclude the poor, but they should find that access via telephone or internet is hardly more complex than paying their utility bills in these ways.

E8 Focus

As their time and interests are limited, citizens must be able to focus on a restricted number of issues. The voter may deal with only those issues and only those questions within an issue, that he or she wishes to vote on. Focus is also assisted by E9, as noted below.

E9 Long running fundamental issues

Questions are to be repeated over many years in order to facilitate deliberation, so the issues the poll treats must be long-running. This, together with the focus described above and the need to make this limited input as politically significant as possible indicates that the issues dealt with should be of strategic importance. This focus is essential for effective public participation, as discussed in Chapter 6/ Major functions of the People's Forum / 'Economizing citizen effort'.

In studying sixteen deliberative organizations, David Ryfe (2002, 369) observed they

have learned that conversations about values ought to be organized differently than conversations about actions. For instance, disagreements between pro- and anti-abortion activists are not likely to be reduced by the distillation of more policy information or the convening of a debate... [When values are not shared,] conversations break down very quickly.

The Forum's focus on fundamental issues enables this problem to be addressed, so that the recognition of shared values may be developed or strengthened (see also Chapter 6/ Major functions of the People's Forum / 'Examining basics').

E10 Wide-ranging menu of issues

The People's Forum ballot paper would present a wide spectrum of issues (see Function 12/ 'E10' below) and embrace controversy, in order to raise all options and stimulate voter participation, debate and mutual education. John Dryzek (2006, 47-48) has called for this type of approach, arguing "for a discursive democracy that can handle deep differences... [to] seek robust and passionate exchanges across identities." He recommends that these exchanges be moderated by "partially decoupling the deliberation and decision aspects of democracy, locating deliberation... in the public sphere at a distance from any contest for sovereign authority" (2006, 47). Such decoupling is to be achieved by the non-binding status of Forum results (see E17 in Functions 6 and 12 below). Mutz (2006, 80-84) observes that dogmatism/ non-dogmatism is a stable personality trait and exposure to oppositional views creates tolerance in non-dogmatists and intolerance in dogmatists. Most learning from exposure to crosscutting information will be done by non-dogmatists. Intolerant responses should be minimized by making information available with minimal confrontation, such as by presenting references and web links that citizens may use or ignore and by balancing the presentation of information that supports different conclusions.

E11 Investigating interconnections

Many issues are related to other issues. For example, the issue of matching supply and demand in energy in a way that minimizes depletion of natural resources is usually seen by democracies as being the narrow issue of whether to supply more energy in ways such as solar or wind power that are less destructive of these resources than using fossil or nuclear fuels or converting rivers, valleys and natural lakes into hydro-electric reservoirs. However, matching supply and demand in energy has another component, the social choice of the size of the demand to be supplied, as discussed in Chapter 5. Dealing with an issue by ignoring its connections with others may allow both it and the others to get worse.

Connections between issues are to be identified in the ballot paper by references in an issue's description or in its questions, to other issues or questions on the ballot. These references would invite the voter to consider those other issues and questions before finalizing her vote on the question before her. This should reduce the problem noted in 1954 by Hyman and Sheatsley (cited in Bennett 2006, 115): "People often express approval of two ideas which are quite incompatible with one another and they frequently uphold a general principle while denying its specific application".

E12 Search for solutions

The ballot questions must focus on causes and systemic solutions rather than on the amelioration of symptoms of problems. To fail to do this will make the poll superficial and invite public criticism and boycott, but this task will be complicated for some issues as there may be no universally accepted definition of the problem. Hence the observation in Chapter 6/ The People's Forum/ 'Ballot paper' that the poll managers must be skilled in the analysis of issues.

E13 Questions on attitude, justification, implementation and willingness to pay

Several 'attitude' questions on an issue would usually be the first posed on that topic in the ballot paper. These would ask the voter for her attitude on aspects of the issue. An issue may then be further explored by 'justification' questions that search for common ground underlying differing attitudes of voters. These would inquire into the reasons for the answer given to an attitude question and may prompt the voter to re-examine her attitude. To go further and pose justification questions on justification questions may make the ballot paper too complicated, but such progression may be possible by changing justification questions in subsequent polls. Justification questions should help the debates that precede a vote, as they would allow analysed feedback to the public on reasons for attitudes expressed in the previous poll, which may show why opinions diverge in the community and allow future debate to focus on the reasons for this. Such analysis might also correlate attitudes on an issue with whether or not the voters supporting each attitude gave answers to justification questions on their attitude. This may help the public to

further deliberate these issues by indicating which attitudes seem dogmatic and which appear to be reasoned. Other types of questions which might be posed on an issue may be 'implementation' questions, which ask what the government should do, and 'willingness to pay' (or what citizens should do) as discussed under E14 in Function 3 below.

The risk of polarization of a community through deliberation and the potential for the People's Forum to avoid this is discussed in Chapter 6 toward the end of 'The People's Forum compared with principles for deliberative democracy and public management'. Major design elements intended to minimize polarization are E11 (investigating connections between issues), E12 (searching for solutions to causes), E13 (justification questions) and E14 (the solidarity exchange, as described below under Function 3).

In addition to posing multiple questions on an issue, each question may offer a menu of several choices. This approach has been advocated by Chambers (2001, 251), as it "encourages substantive discussion on issues."

Function 2: Being open and easily accessible to the whole electorate so that the deliberation fostered by the poll is widespread and all electors, including politically alienated groups, find it easy to vote.

John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse (2002, 239) have observed: "While people are not eager to provide input into political decisions, they want to know that they could have input into political decisions if they ever wanted to do so. In fact they are passionate about this." Moreover, they want their participation to "be welcome and meaningful". This indicates that the Forum's poll must be very easy to access and give some political influence to the views of its voters. Easy access is provided by several elements of its design such as E7, 8, 9 and 22. The last of these concerns voting security and is discussed below under Function 12.

E7 describes accessibility as being provided by several features of the poll: all electors being eligible to vote; voting to be done by phone or internet; the availability

of personal identification for voting on impulse (see Chapter 6/ Mission, strategies.../ 'Voting process'); a week for voting so that it is hard for electors to overlook the opportunity; and media coverage before, during and after voting.

Function 3: Assisting citizens to indicate the specific responses they want their government to make to the issues covered.

E13 Action questions

Each issue should, if appropriate, have a question asking respondents what they want their government to do about it.

E14 The solidarity exchange: eliciting willingness to pay for solutions

Perhaps the most crucial responses by government on many issues, and often the most difficult for elected governments to make are those requiring them to ask citizens to make costly contributions, perhaps with money or with changes in lifestyle or attitudes, in order to deal effectively with those issues. The People's Forum may question citizens on what contributions they want to make. Those concerning the willingness of citizens to pay financially for government action are collectively referred to here as 'solidarity exchange' questions, for this function of the poll bears some resemblance to that of a stock exchange. The structure of this 'exchange' is tentatively sketched below in this subsection under 'Objectives for the solidarity exchange: facilitating commitment and solidarity' and also under 'How the SoX would operate'.

The stock exchange is a market for individual choice in which entities choose to purchase and sell rights to profits (which are private goods) and thereby invest in the production of other private goods. The 'solidarity exchange' (SoX) would be similar in that it would be a market for financial investment in goods, but differ in that it deals in public goods. This market would operate through questions in the People's Forum poll where citizens may compile pledges to pay, or requests to cease to pay, for public goods. Over a sequence of polling events, these pledges and

requests may develop into strong trends that become seen as instructions to politicians to purchase or liquidate public goods, as discussed in Functions 5 and 10 below. Some space is now devoted to preliminary ideas for this exchange, because citizens must be able to negotiate easily with each other on how much they will pay for important public goods that cannot be provided unless each makes a contribution. Action on global warming poses this type of problem, for whether the concern of people around the world creates an effective response depends on highly developed capacities for collective action, both within and between nations. Before describing the proposed broad structure of the solidarity exchange, circumstances affecting collective action are outlined to help the reader understand why this design element should work. These same circumstances also affect the functioning of the People's Forum as a whole.

The collective action dilemma for democracies

Evolutionary psychology indicates that the fundamental preference of humans for group life has given them a social environment that over several million years has selected the genetically determined predisposition of "wary cooperator" (Hibbing and Alford 2004). This means that we are generally "willing to pay our fair share only assuming others do the same and evaders face swift and certain consequences" (Alford and Hibbing 2004, 711). Kevin Smith (2006, 1015, 1013) observes that "what drives the behavior of wary cooperators is 'sucker aversion'... It is not just what they get from decisions, but whether they perceive the process of decision-making as fair that leads people to view the decisions as legitimate." In democracies, the primary dysfunction of confusion about who directs the polity allows sucker aversion to prevent citizens from acting together as directors to ensure that public goods are produced.

This confusion is an absence of communication that prevents other communication and as Andrew Flanagin, Cynthia Stohl and Bruce Bimber (2006, 32) observe: "collective action is communicative, insofar as it entails efforts by people to cross boundaries by expressing or acting on individual (i.e. private) interest in a way that is observable to others (i.e. public)." They stress that "formal organization is

central to locating and contacting potential participants in collective action, motivating them and coordinating their actions” (Bimber et al 2005, 365). However the organization of liberal democracy is flawed by ambiguous delegation. The People’s Forum is designed to correct this by clarifying the roles of electors and those they elect. This will facilitate communication between electors and also between electors and politicians, fostering reciprocity, openness and trust that would allow effective negotiation of the norms, rules and sanctions that most can agree on for collective action. The solidarity exchange would perform a similar role with a more specific focus within the People’s Forum. It would assist citizens to act as directors of the polity by helping them to decide what they are prepared to pay for particular public goods. Before describing the structure of this exchange, the two feelings it is designed to help develop and communicate are discussed.

Objectives for the solidarity exchange: facilitating commitment and solidarity

If a liberal democracy is to take strong action on an issue that will require a significant cost to be borne by each citizen, then most citizens must have the following two feelings.

1. Commitment

Each citizen must feel that the action is worth her share of its cost. In the terminology of social psychology, this feeling would be the citizen’s ‘commitment’ to that action (Fetchenhauer et al. 2006). The measure of commitment might be the individual’s willingness to pay (WTP) for the action, in terms of the percentage of the per capita cost that she offers to pay. This per capita cost may be expressed as extra income tax or higher cost of living (COL) and voters could vote for more than 100% of the per capita cost, in order to express a high commitment to getting that public good supplied.

2. Solidarity

Each citizen must feel that if he makes a commitment to the action, this will be supported by commitments by other citizens to that action. This might be called the ‘solidarity’ (Fetchenhauer et al. 2006) of the community on that action. One measure of solidarity might be the fraction of the electorate that states some commitment,

even if it is zero WTP, for such unwillingness is taken into account by summing all commitments. Another possible measure of solidarity on an action could be the ratio of votes to pay something, to votes to pay zero for that action. This measure ignores the large majority who may not vote in the People's Forum and its SoX, but it may be considered a fair indication because the government will not act on it until it has been tested with the public, to see whether citizens accept it as 'an instruction by all', as discussed below under 'How the SoX would operate'.

Commitment and solidarity may be developed in a community if they are demonstrated by citizens to each other in a repetitive manner that allows them to respond by joining or leaving the demonstration or by revising their commitment. By facilitating such reciprocity, the SoX may help citizens build a common resolution to act on difficult issues.

How the SoX would operate

The 'public commitment' on a policy is proposed to be the average of the individual commitments to it as expressed via the SoX. This terminology implies that the average WTP expressed in the exchange is to be taken as the commitment for the whole community even though it may directly express the views of only a small proportion. Only a minority, let us say, perhaps five to twenty percent, may bother to vote in a People's Forum poll - and much less on any particular issue it lists. However, after several well publicized annual votes beyond the stage where the voting trend (see Function 4 below) for that particular question has levelled, the public commitment registered by the solidarity exchange for that question may be taken by the whole polity as acceptable to those who do not bother to cast a ballot, for the poll is voluntary and open to every elector to take part. An average SoX WTP ('public commitment') that is sufficient to pay for the implementation of a policy if paid by all citizens may be tested to see if it is accepted as 'an instruction by all' by the government declaring an intention to implement it unless the next poll shows a reduction of this WTP. This intention would heighten the incentive of electors to vote in SoX, because it may soon influence the taxes or prices they pay. An indication

of the strength of the resolve of the community to act on an issue could be given by multiplying public commitment with solidarity, to produce a 'solidarity index'.

The operation of the SoX may be considered to comprise three stages. Two lie within the People's Forum process, the first being the questions in the poll that ask voters to express their WTP for the implementation of particular policies, together with the responses of voters. These questions would state the approximate costs to each citizen of implementing a range of policies on an issue (if all taxpayers paid an income-proportional contribution) and invite each voter to pledge some commitment to the one they prefer. The hard copy ballot paper would include a table entitled 'CHECK YOUR OFFER!' where voters should enter each vote they make to pay extra tax or cost of living. This is to help them add up their SoX bids so they can see their total commitment to pay, before their vote is submitted for tallying. This addition would be done automatically by the website ballot paper, which would display it to prompt voters to check for over-commitment on SoX questions before they finalize their vote.

The second stage of the SoX is the post-poll analysis, publication and public discussion, of the answers to the WTP questions. This analysis would summarize the answers in terms of public commitments, solidarities and solidarity indices. It would invite citizens to reconsider what they want to pay for.

The third stage lies outside the People's Forum and is the response of politicians to solidarity indices. Those indices that show citizens as sustaining demands that they be enabled to pay for specific policies will request and possibly even command politicians to organize this, either through higher taxes or policy that raises prices. To help citizens ensure they make bids they can afford, the SoX would present a comprehensive menu of policy costs covering, in broad terms, programs currently implemented by government as well as the additional public goods canvassed by the People's Forum. These costs would be expressed as percentages of either the citizen's annual income before tax or increases in COL. If voters want to pay less than they currently do, they register this by voting for reductions in expenditure on existing programs and voting zero WTP on WTP questions on the ballot. Negative commitments on WTP questions would not be recognized by the SoX but may be

interpreted as zeros. This system should enable electors to vote for fund transfers from existing programs to new ones presented by WTP questions.

Function 4: Indicating when the people have reached a stable set of views on an issue after extensive public discussion and voting.

E4 Repetition

Repetition of the vote by the People's Forum would allow the plotting of trends in the opinions it registers as discussed in Chapter 6/ The mission, strategies and shape of the People's Forum/ 'The poll structure'. The issues on which these trends show no change over the last few voting events can be considered to be those on which the public has made up its mind after the process has given it considerable opportunity to evolve different views. At this point, either a degree of consensus has been reached or the people have essentially agreed to differ so there is likely to be an acceptance that the majority could have its way. That particular issue may then be dropped from the poll.

Function 5: Developing a strong political influence for public opinion expressed in People's Forum polls

E4 Repetition

The repetition of the People's Forum vote is to be a regular event that is very public and promotes the opinion it reflects by giving it sustained exposure. After a year or two the public profile of the poll should focus citizens' attention on the issues it covers, not only in the weeks before the poll, but throughout the year. Public awareness that these particular issues are voted on year after year, should make them and the specific questions posed by the poll, ongoing subjects of attention by the media, schools, universities, interest groups, legislators, political candidates and the public at large. As people see the event recurring, more may be stimulated to

argue, discuss, read, think and vote. The resultant profile of the poll and the numbers voting in it will do much to determine its political influence.

E5 Trends

As noted above under Function 4, repetition of the vote allows the poll to show trends in the development of opinion. The managers of the People's Forum would publicize these trends before, during and at the conclusion of each annual vote. Trends which run against existing policies or laws or urge new ones should apply a degree of public pressure on politicians to make the changes these trends advocate, as noted below under 'E3 voluntary voting'. Such pressure may excite more voter participation which may then generate more political influence, more discussion of the issues and greater public wisdom. Note that a People's Forum majority vote is likely to be a small minority in the whole electorate. 'E3 Voluntary voting' below gives reasons to anticipate that the views of these minority-majorities may develop a public status and political power that far exceeds their weight as a proportion of the electorate.

E6 Feedback

Stringing the vote out over a week as described under 'E6 Feedback' in Function 1 should accentuate the profile of this forum and enhance its political influence. The annual repetition of People's Forum polls would do this as well and also enable the people to see what they as a society, think, and to some extent why they think that way (see E13 in Function 1). This invites them to argue again with each other and vote next year and so on, continuing this feedback until it becomes obvious to all that a majority view has developed that is stable in the face of, and as a result of, all the argument and information that can be mustered. As noted under Function 4, this should generate an agreement to differ between the majority and minorities on any issue and a public acceptance that the majority can have its way.

E3 Voluntary voting

Power to those who are interested enough to vote

As discussed in Chapter 6/ Major functions of the People's Forum/ 'An element of meritocracy', the management of public affairs should follow the views of those who are interested in these issues. This provides a basis for the People's Forum to acquire public status and political influence, as its voluntary voting should ensure that it registers only the views of those who are interested in the issues it treats. This interest will have stimulated many of these voters to develop their knowledge and opinions on these issues. However, as noted in 'An element of meritocracy' in Chapter 6, voter interest in the issues also means that People's Forum voters will include dogmatists as well as questioning thinkers. However, the poll process should draw both types into exchanges of views and the questions it poses would be designed to use this interaction to try to develop reasoning and negotiation as discussed above under Function 1/ 'E11-13'. These effects should lead the public to recognize that People's Forum poll results reflect more considered judgement than conventional opinion polls, so that the public learns to grant more status to the Forum than to opinion polls despite the fact that the Forum represents the views of only a fraction of the population. As discussed in Chapter 2/ Ambiguous delegation/ 'Ignorant directors', the mass public has very low levels of political information with only perhaps ten percent of the population having much political sophistication. As this disengagement is an enduring feature, experience with the Forum could assist it to become well known to many citizens and thus part of their understanding of both opinion polls and the People's Forum. Exposure to Forum polls may therefore encourage citizens to demand strong responses by politicians to Forum results, even if only a low proportion of the public votes in these polls. The ability of citizens to make political judgments with heuristics (Lupia 1994) suggests that the People's Forum could perform well as a cueing device.

High status and influence for this poll would also be supported by a public awareness that its voluntary voting allows any elector to participate. After the introduction of a People's Forum poll it should soon become common knowledge that if bystanders become alarmed at the way that concerned opinion is evolving and

expressed through this process, they can decide it is time that they became concerned and voted in the next poll, or in the current one if it is still open.

Leading edge

Because the voluntary vote of the People's Forum will reflect the views of those who are interested in the issues, it is likely to indicate what the views of the majority of the whole population will be on those issues in the future, if and when most citizens take an interest in them. Such growth of interest in issues may be encouraged by the publicity generated by the People's Forum. Politicians will be sensitive to any such leading edge indication by this poll because many of them want to be seen to be providing leadership.

E16 Report cards: People's Forum ratings for politicians

The managers of the People's Forum would publish 'report cards' (Weir 2004) of the performance and attitudes of political candidates and members of the legislature. A prominent section of each card would be the degree to which the subject's views conform to People's Forum voting trends. As indicated in 'E3 Voluntary voting' above, this voting is likely to show the most informed and considered views of the community on the issues it deals with and will thus indicate to politicians the views they should espouse in order to represent the people in the most responsible way. If electors develop an appreciation of this, the report card would become a highly regarded guide for their vote at the next election, giving the poll more political clout. In addition to helping establish the Forum as a heuristic, such report cards should also promote community-wide deliberation by helping to focus attention on the Forum process.

Function 6: Developing political influence as or after, but not before, opinion develops into a stable public judgment

E17 Advisory influence

People's Forum results would not be binding on legislatures, merely advisory. They would exert a pressure of concerned public opinion for new laws and policies to reflect the trends in, or statements of, concerned opinion that are established by successive polls.

E3 Voluntary voting

Voluntary voting means that People's Forum results will reflect the views of only a part of the electorate. This may make politicians in the few countries such as Australia, where the whole electorate is compelled to elect representatives, slow to depart from their current policies in order to follow People's Forum results. In countries where voting for representatives is voluntary, the Forum may exert political influence more quickly because those who are concerned enough to vote in its polls may also be those who vote in elections.

E5 Trends

Politicians would be likely to wait for trends in the People's Forum to establish, or to establish and then level off to a flat line, rather than react immediately to a poll result only to become known for outdated views after a few more polls. They will want to wait to see if there is any reversal of trends as discussed under Function 8 below.

Function 7: Reserving political influence on issues dealt with by this poll for those who have thought about these issues (the meritocracy principle)

E3 Voluntary voting

In Function 5 above it is indicated that political influence is likely to be generated for the opinion registered by the People's Forum. As the voting that expresses this opinion is voluntary, it will tend not to register the opinions of those who are disengaged and think little about the type of issue that the Forum treats. The People's Forum will therefore give political influence to those who have thought about those issues. These people are likely to include dogmatic types as well as citizens with more carefully considered opinions, but the involvement of dogmatists may stimulate them to think more constructively as discussed above in Function 5/ E3/ 'Power to those who are interested enough to vote'.

Function 8: Inviting the public to review its opinion on an issue, as expressed in People's Forum polls, before the political influence of these polls causes that opinion to become policy or law

E18 Executive review

As a People's Forum is run, electors who have not voted in its polls may become worried that politicians will introduce new policies or laws to reflect the Forum's polling trends. This prospect may also cause previous voters to change their minds. Politicians will therefore warn the electorate of their intention to act if the trends are not reversed at the next poll. With an eye to votes, they will want electors to approve their actions.

Function 9: Minimizing the ability of powerful narrow interests to distort the development of the opinions of the public and their voting in People's Forum polls

Wealthy interests may seek to manipulate public opinion in many ways, such as by funding biased media programs and movies, through editorial policy, by advertising, by supporting selected scholars, activist individuals and groups, by deterring activists through strategic litigations against public participation (SLAPPs), by funding political electoral campaigns, by lobbying and so on. Such activities compromise democratic integrity by corrupting the one person-one vote principle, in effect delivering multiple votes to those with money. Graham Smith (2001, 88) considers this danger to be

a criticism of the existing practice of initiative and referendum, not of their potential... we need to spend more time investigating possible 'imaginative safeguards' to ensure that information is balanced and that the influence of money and media interests does not grow... However, even with... [the existing] imbalance of resources, greens have had success [with initiatives and referenda on environmental issues].

Lupia and Matsusaka (2004, 478) support this view in finding that the evidence does not support the "idea that the initiative allows special interests to subvert the policy process to the detriment of the public". Nevertheless, the more influence that the People's Forum develops, the more attractive a target it will become for control by parties with narrow interests. However, as explained under E4 below, the transparency of the People's Forum process should mean that as its influence increases, undemocratic attempts to manipulate it will become more likely to be counterproductive for manipulators.

E4 Long-running repetition of issues and questions

The Forum's long-running process should make manipulation expensive and also endanger the public image of manipulators.

Exhaustion of wealthy manipulators through long-running repetitive polling

The People's Forum process would take several, perhaps many years to facilitate and demonstrate the development of public opinion on a question. More time may elapse before such trends are translated into political action, as indicated by Functions 6 and 8. Such time spans would make it very expensive to fund a propaganda campaign to sway the views of citizens and their responses to the poll.

Exposure of manipulators to public censure through long-running repetitive polling

The passage of time as these polls deal with each issue would also make any attempt to buy votes on it risky for the manipulator, because the public, media and politicians will have plenty of opportunity to recognize what is going on. When a manipulator's efforts are focused on a question running in a People's Forum poll, the publicity surrounding this event is likely to make those efforts obvious to citizens. The more money the manipulator spends, the more blatant their activity will appear to citizens concerned with the issue. As these citizens are those who are likely to vote in the poll, big spending by manipulators risks damaging both their reputation and their cause. This situation is also likely to encourage citizens to become more discerning about whether the information they receive is misleading.

A similar risk arises for manipulators whose power to distort the poll arises not so much from wealth as from an ability to organize and control electors who comprise a significant proportion of the community being polled. Such potential organizers may be large corporations with many employees or shareholders, unions with many members, or government agencies with many employees. The managers of such groups could attempt to influence the vote on People's Forum questions in which they had an interest, by encouraging or instructing their shareholders or members or employees to vote in the poll and to give the responses the managers want. This behaviour is likely to become public knowledge because of (a) anticipation by many citizens that any entity with this organizational ability that has vested interests in a question on the ballot will be tempted to do this; (b) suspicions and protests of citizens with opposing views; (c) poll results on that question which appear

surprisingly weighted towards these vested interests; and (d) the possibility of evidence being found, for example by whistle-blower disclosure of unfair organization of voters by narrow interests. The annual repetition of the voting event allows time for these factors to raise the alarm and for citizens to respond with public criticism and by voting in protest against causes promoted by undemocratic manipulators.

Suspicion or confirmation of this type of activity should spark public debate about whether it is excessively self-interested and thus against the public interest. Such debate could be assisted if the People's Forum added another question to those dealing with the issue evoking an undemocratically manipulated vote. This could ask voters whether they considered that responses to the questions on this issue were being unduly influenced by narrow interests acting against the public interest. Any controversy over such a question would focus more public attention on the issue in the ballot that is stimulating it, drawing in electors who are not interested in that issue but want to vote on the problem of manipulation of democracy. The managers of the People's Forum should continue to run the questions generating the 'manipulation' debate until it has been cleared up. If the dispute over manipulation drags on without showing signs of resolution, all the questions at stake may have to be deleted from the ballot. If the controversy is resolved, the question on undemocratic manipulation would be dropped leaving the questions on the issue itself to be run through more polls until they had developed stable votes indicating that public deliberations on them had run their course.

The outcome of extended public debate and voting on whether votes organized by vested interests are excessively self-interested may depend on whether the government has procedures in place to compensate those who would suffer loss because of new laws and policies. Providing public goods at unjust cost to individuals is likely to damage the image of the public interest and the legitimacy of government.

E19 Defence against manipulation of opinion and voting

If manipulation by powerful self-interested entities is not stopped by financial exhaustion or exposure to ethical judgment by citizens, the credibility of the People's Forum may suffer as the one-person one-vote fairness of its voting becomes suspect. How much damage such suspicion does to the reputation of the Forum may depend on whether the questions involved can be identified, so they are protected as suggested above, or abandoned as being likely to generate undemocratically distorted results. A backup procedure for preventing such damage to the poll is that it would run questions specifically on the issue of powerful narrow interests manipulating the opinions and voting of the public. A target for such inquisition that is given little mention in the discussion above is the media. The political power of the media differs from that of narrow interests that are either wealthy or can organize and control voters, as it comes from a direct and incessant communication to the public. A free and diverse media is essential for informed and well-developed public opinion. This may mean that free-to-air television and radio, which are sponsored by the state and thereby independent of commercial imperatives, is a vital part of the operating environment for the People's Forum. The Forum's managers should consider canvassing in their ballot paper, laws or policies designed to prevent manipulation of public opinion by all types of powerful narrow interests, not least the media. This should be done at the inception of these polls, not only for their own protection but for that of deliberative democracy in general. The People's Forum should be able to help the public consider such ways of protecting and improving democracy - if it can do this before manipulators can interfere.

Function 10: Developing the political will for difficult political decisions to be executed

E20 Incentives for public participation

The People's Forum should increase the political will to both recognize issues and act on them, for it would help citizens participate more directly in the policy

formation process by enabling them to more actively determine what issues are seen as important and what they, through their government, will do about them.

Widespread distrust of politicians, as discussed in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2/

‘Ambiguous delegation’, should motivate many citizens to take the opportunity offered by the Forum, to issue public instructions to these agents, even though such directives are non-binding.

E4 Repetition of the poll

The ongoing operation of the People’s Forum would allow it to monitor and pressure the implementation of the policy changes it effects. Lupia and Matsusaka (2004, 476) observe that difficulty with such implementation currently arises because

the same governmental actors who once blocked the policies from proceeding through traditional legislative channels may be in a position to influence, or even determine, the extent of their post-election implementation and enforcement... Organizations that pass initiatives...often disband soon after the election... Compared with professional legislatures, such entities are in a relatively bad position to oversee those charged with implementing their edicts.

Function 11: Offering a capacity for citizens to initiate and run the poll without government assistance and funding, if these are difficult to obtain

As is discussed later in Chapter 8/ ‘A small scale trial...’, the Forum is not amenable to starting up as a small, inexpensive, local project and then expanding it. This is because a large operation that covers a province, state or nation is needed to create the strong political impact required to stimulate public interest and deliberation. Publics of large size usually have more power to determine their future than small ones, so People’s Forums run at large scales would offer the prospect of strategic influence to those eligible to participate in them. As the People’s Forum is designed to develop strategic policy, running it at a local scale will appear irrelevant and impotent. The requirement of large scale for the People’s Forum makes it

difficult for citizens to initiate and run it. However, as noted under E3 and E17 below and discussed in Chapter 6/ 'Initiating and running the Forum', this is a basically a financial problem that is probably easier to solve than that of raising the political will to have government introduce and run the system.

E3 Voluntary voting, E17 Advisory influence

Voluntary, advisory voting allows the People's Forum to be run as a private organisation if governments are unwilling to run it as a service to the public. Voluntary, self-selecting voting also facilitates its operation on a large scale.

E7 Accessibility

Polling by telephone and the internet makes voting highly accessible to citizens. It also facilitates fast tallying by computer and minimizes cost. As noted under E7 in Function 1 the 'digital divide' may inhibit internet voting by the poor, the elderly and the disabled, but the availability of telephone voting may compensate for some of this.

E21 Funding

Possible sources of finance for this system are discussed in Chapter 6 under 'Initiating and running the Forum'. The economies of operation noted above under E7 support the feasibility of raising funds for a demonstration poll covering a substantial region such as a province or state. This may have to use low or negligible voting security as discussed under E22 in Function 12 below and be restricted to online presentation and voting, without backup from hard-copy ballot papers.

Function 12: Developing the confidence of the general public in the People's Forum as a political institution, so that the people and their representatives will maintain it and use it. This function includes a capacity for the public to set or supervise the agenda

The People's Forum should be attractive to many citizens, for there is growing interest in new democratic processes. As Mark Warren (2002b, 681-2, emphasis in original) observes,

people in the developed democracies have become *disaffected* from their political institutions. They are now less likely to trust their governments and more likely to judge them incompetent, untrustworthy, and even corrupt. While the causes and meanings of these trends have been subject to considerable study and debate, it seems that disaffection reflects not apathy but increasingly critical evaluations of government... increasing disaffection from formal political institutions seems to be paralleled by increasing attention toward other ways and means of getting collective things done... The most dramatic developments over the past couple of decades include the rise in power of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the international arena and the dramatic increase in associations devoted to problems of collective action that replace, displace, or work in concert with state powers.

E3 Voluntary voting

If the People's Forum is to succeed, its selection of issues, questions and menus of answers must be seen by the community to be relevant, comprehensive, competent and balanced. If citizens suspect shortcomings they are unlikely to participate. Voluntary voting therefore confers an easily exercised power of boycott on citizens and this will oblige poll managers to invite suggestions from them on the selection of issues, questions and menus of answers, as discussed in E2 below. This invitation would be a prominent, permanent feature of the ballot paper.

E2 Agenda contributions from citizens

In response to requests from citizens for issues and questions on the ballot paper to be altered or deleted, or for new ones to be added, the managers would publish a list of the requests they have received since the previous poll. This would note whether each request has been acceded to and if not, why not. The reasons given for refusing requests, together with any ensuing public controversy, should contribute to the deliberation of issues by the public. Such capacity for the public to have a continuing influence on the agenda conforms to the recommendation by Chambers (2001, 251) that questions should be chosen and framed as an iterative, nonbinding process that makes referendums “part of an ongoing process of consultation rather than a once-and-for-all ratification.”

As discussed below under E10, the agenda may be of indeterminate length, so any agenda suggestions could be accepted by the Forum to produce what might be called a ‘wikiagenda’, after the manner of compilation of Wikipedia. However this is unlikely to produce a high quality ballot paper without strong control by the managers of the Forum, including their inclusion of many issues and questions. Their judgement would be needed to ensure that the issues placed on the ballot are long-running and preferably of high public significance either on their own or because of their relationships to other issues on the ballot. The managers must also ensure that the most crucial questions are posed (see Function 1/ E12, E13 above), including questions aimed at systemic solutions rather than at the treatment of symptoms. They would also make sure that references are given in issue descriptions and questions to other issues or questions in the paper that are related to them. The description of each issue also requires editorial supervision to minimize bias and to make sure that crucial aspects are covered. For such reasons, the published agenda must be the responsibility of the managers, but the voluntary voting of the Forum ultimately transfers this responsibility to the public, for they will see what the managers present and may pass judgement on this by voting in the poll, or by boycotting it, or by publicly voicing their approval or disapproval of the management of the Forum.

An alternative to relying on the poll managers to write the agenda might be a government regulation that requires the Forum to run issues and questions that are requested by the public through a minimum number of signatures on a petition, as is done with citizen initiated referenda. This is not recommended as it should not be necessary, it requires the government to assist the Forum and it would be time - consuming and expensive for citizens. The cost of collecting signatures to place one measure on a citizen initiated referendum in California has now risen to over US\$1 million (Lupia and Matsusaka 2004).

As the Forum's ballot paper requires voters to give their personal response to pre-prepared questions, it restricts their creativity in devising solutions to policy problems by comparison with deliberative processes such as consensus conferences and citizen juries in which the whole group discusses an issue and devises a joint response (G. Smith 2009, 100). However, this constraint should be largely countered by the Forum's invitation to citizens to contribute to its agenda, for this enables them to raise questions implying solutions that differ from those suggested by the questions already posed by the ballot paper.

E10 Wide-ranging menu

An extensive ballot paper that covers the widest range of important long-running issues would maximize the number of citizens who could find within it, issues of concern to them and who may therefore engage with the poll. The size of this menu should not be intimidating to citizens because, as with using dictionaries, telephone directories and the internet, people will easily see that size is helpful, for it means they are likely to find that the ballot includes issues on which they want to have a say.

An extensive ballot paper will not make large demands on the time of citizens, for they may only vote once a year when the poll is established and when they do, they only vote on those issues in which they are interested. They will be assisted to find these in several ways: by grouping related topics under headings such as International Relations, Population, Natural Resources and the Environment, The Economy, and Ethics; by showing such headings in a table of contents; by listing

issues in an index; and by providing a search engine in the web-based ballot paper. The act of voting should only take an hour or two at home and probably less when the voter becomes familiar with the ballot paper and becomes more expert with the set of issues she wants to vote on. Another demand on the time of citizens is noted by David Beetham (1999, 8): "It takes time to grasp and discuss the complex issues involved in public decision-making, and there is only so much time that people will agree to devote to it." The People's Forum provides economy of time by not requiring citizens to attend deliberation events, either in person or online. However, as it would provide an easy, quick and potentially slightly influential way for each citizen to express political views, it may encourage them to spend more of their free time reading about, observing, discussing and thinking about issues. As part of this activity they may want to join deliberative groups such as study circles.

The length of the ballot paper will be determined by how much editorial and associated work the Forum's management team can handle, which includes responding to requests from citizens and groups for changes to the menus of issues, questions and answers.

E15 Competition

Competition between two different People's Forums may assist with creative approaches to the menus of issues, questions and answers that are presented to citizens and this would maximize their choices of issues and questions and their interest in this system. However, as indicated above in this section under E3, E2 and E10, public scrutiny and good management should make this unnecessary.

E20 Incentives for public participation

People may vote in People's Forum polls and also argue to get others to vote their way, through both egoistic and solidary interests. Egoism will incline them to try to get their preferences to dominate the results in order to take advantage of any political influence developed by the Forum. The solidary, or cooperative and altruistic motivation (Alford and Hibbing 2004; Fehr and Fischbacher 2003; Orbell et al. 2004) is partly a desire to raise the profile of important public issues in order to

promote public discourse that may develop and help to execute wiser public policy, especially via the influence of the Forum. As it would give each citizen the prospect of having slightly more power to express and implement their opinions, at a very low personal cost in effort and time as noted in E10 above, the Forum should stimulate some citizens to develop their opinions on public affairs and in turn this may increase the demand for accurate information. A motivation that should encourage both egoistic and solidary responses is, as noted in Function 10/ E20, that widespread distrust of politicians and conventional political processes may drive some citizens to take the opportunity offered by the Forum to attempt to publicly and regularly issue instructions to them. This motivation for engagement may also encourage some citizens to learn more about the issues.

Stephen Bennett (2006) emphasizes the importance of cognitive ability, motivation and opportunity in determining the level of political information possessed by citizens. This makes good organization and communication essential, because organization facilitates both motivation (Bimber, Flanagin and Stohl 2005) and opportunity, while communication encourages motivation by developing both trust and incentives of purposive and solidary types. Bennett (2006) considers nothing can be done about deficits in cognitive ability, but the People's Forum aims to minimize this problem by allowing many with these deficits to be bypassed by preferentially facilitating the political influence of those who are thinking about public issues (see Function 7). The Forum's design assumes that many of these engaged citizens will have high cognitive ability.

E22 Voting security

Some degree of voting security is essential for citizens to have confidence in the Forum. Security is provided by several conditions: that only those people eligible to vote are allowed to; that they each have only one vote per polling event (one vote may comprise answers to any questions on any number of the issues on the ballot); that their privacy is protected; that their votes are tallied without corruption; and possibly other facilities, such as a voter being able to revise her vote before the final tally and being able to discover if her vote was omitted or miscounted and then to be

able to correct this (Schneier 1996, 125). The security system should permit easy access for voting and preferably the freedom for the poll to operate without interference by government. Ease of access ideally includes the opportunity for electors to vote on impulse, without prior registration, as discussed in Chapter 6/ The mission, strategies.../ 'Voting process'. In Australia, impulse voting with some security requires the electoral roll to be used as votes are cast, in order to check whether each voter is eligible and to ensure that they only vote once. High security will not cater for voting on impulse as it requires the voter to first contact the Forum's central tabulating facility (CTF) to register and be allocated an identification number. The voter may then vote, quoting that number and attaching a personally selected two-part code. When the CTF publishes her vote with the first part of the code she may confirm it by attaching the second part and returning it to the CTF (Schneier 1996, 129). This procedure allows errors in tabulation to be corrected by the voter and also permits her to alter her vote, but its complexity may discourage engagement if it were used by the People's Forum. As this poll is not an election but only registers non-decisive opinions, a simpler lower security approach should be adequate.

To enable impulse voting in countries where citizens do not have a personal identification number (PIN) that locates them on an electoral roll, the People's Forum security system must personally deliver a PIN to every eligible voter before the poll, or the ballot paper must instruct the voter how to devise his or her own PIN, so that the tally computer can use it to locate the voter's name on the roll. The latter type of PIN might be name and date of birth, converted by the voter into a number code if this is needed for telephone voting. Both types of PIN require the cooperation of the government for the use of its electoral roll and this may not be forthcoming. If a government chose to assist in this way it could either (a) license the polling company to use the electronic form of the roll to identify eligible voters in order to check the validity of incoming electronic votes, or (b) authorize the government electoral department to be contracted by the People's Forum to validate incoming electronic votes and then transmit them to the Forum's CTF for tallying, classified as either fraudulent or valid. In Australia, use of the electoral roll by either

option (a) or (b) requires changes to Commonwealth legislation and this may not be possible until a demonstration People's Forum poll is carried out to raise public awareness of its potential.

Where a demonstration of the People's Forum does not have the support of the government, it must be cheap enough for the necessary funds to be raised by citizens and it must proceed without checking each voter's eligibility against the electoral roll. These conditions present two options for the demonstration, both of which would use a web-based ballot paper. The first is to essentially dispense with voting security and perhaps merely require that voters give their name and address before being permitted to vote. This insecure way of demonstrating the People's Forum may be sufficient to gain public comprehension and support. Public confidence in the validity of the results of the initial demonstration polls may be much less important than citizens using the system or seeing it operate, to get a feel for its potential. The second option gives a slight degree of voting security and it allows citizens to either register before the poll or use a credit card to identify themselves if they choose to vote on impulse. To register, they would request (by phone, website or email) a PIN to be sent to their postal or email address. In the case of postal delivery, registration may have to close a few days before the end of the poll to allow the PIN to arrive in time for a vote to be cast. Citizens who do not register before the poll may vote on impulse during the week that it is open by prefacing their telephone or internet vote with a credit card payment of a nominal fee, say 1c, to the People's Forum. Successful payment by the bank to the Forum would inform it that the name used was authentic, or at least linked to the credit card number used. Neither that name nor that card number could be used to vote again without the managers of the Forum seeing it recur, in which case they would block those votes and perhaps the initial one as well, to tally them as fraudulent for a subsequent analysis of which views were falsely represented by multiple votes. With this procedure, impulse voters would pay about 21c to vote (20c for the credit card transaction and 1c for the vote), which is hardly a disincentive. A demonstration of the People's Forum by either the insecure or the slightly secure option may produce pressure from the public for its government to assist future operation of this system,

by public funding and also by allowing voting security to be implemented by making the electoral roll available in either of the two ways (a) and (b) suggested above.

E17 Advisory influence

If the People's Forum is to earn the confidence of the public, it must not incite violent conflict between citizens as they probe controversial and strongly held beliefs. In considering such possibilities, John Dryzek (2006, 47), as noted above under E10 in Function 1, argues for "partially decoupling the deliberation and decision aspects of democracy". The People's Forum does this by producing choices that are not binding on government but which would invite the mass public to make them so.

Concluding comments on design element E1 - the ballot paper

As the transferability of the People's Forum to a liberal democracy will depend on the reception that the public gives to the ballot paper, a few additional comments on its design and potential impact are offered.

A Forum covering a limited jurisdiction such as a state or province would not restrict itself to issues managed at this level, but would also cover issues of a broader scope, from national to global. This is partly to encourage residents to develop preferences for their state in recognition of the wider context in which it operates. It also invites state residents to send messages to their national government and perhaps on occasion to the rest of the world, as well as to their state government. A Forum that is run at a high level of jurisdiction, say nationally, would use ballot papers that differed from state to state in its treatment of state issues but which were identical in the questions they posed on national and wider issues, as noted in Chapter 6/ The mission, strategies.../ 'Ballot paper'. The ballot paper should include subjects that are not normally considered to be issues of public policy, such as the way citizens think, the values they hold and whether they make choices with self-

assurance or defensiveness. Such inquiry into the culture would be a vital part of the deliberation that the People's Forum would try to stimulate among citizens, for their culture influences the opinions they hold and therefore government policy.

An example of the possible treatment of a subject, or a class of issues, by the ballot paper is now given, to help the reader imagine how it would try to foster public deliberation on strategic issues. This illustration uses the subject of population size and shows a possible treatment of this by a ballot paper for the state of Tasmania in a national People's Forum for Australia. The strategic importance of this subject was discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 and the long term focus can be seen in the way the first three issues are treated. This issue currently tends to be treated with more short to medium term emphasis, stressing the impact of migration on unemployment, the congestion of cities, a lack of infrastructure, the desire of the business lobby for labour and domestic demand, the aging of the population and greenhouse gas emissions.

The menus of issues and questions given here are offered as examples and consultation with others may produce a different selection that addresses this class of issues more effectively. Questions and answer menus are identified by codes such as Q1a, which means question 1 for that issue (identified for example, as PO1 issue in the issue class PO) and A1, which means answer menu 1 for the question it follows. The bracketed descriptions following Q and sometimes A, such as 'state', 'national', 'attitude', 'justification', 'implementation' or 'willingness to pay' (see Function1/ 'E13') may not be displayed on the published ballot paper. The menus of answers give a number to the right of each answer for the voter to select for her vote.

**An example of possible treatment of a class of issues by a People’s Forum
ballot paper for the state of Tasmania**

PO POPULATION SIZE

PO1 HOW MANY OF US DO WE WANT?

What future population size do you think our governments should aim at, for the next century or more, in both Australia and the state of Tasmania? Before you commit yourself, you may like to examine and explain your thinking by considering the questions in PO2 and PO3.

Something you may be concerned with here is the question of whether Tasmanians and Australians have the right to choose the size of their populations. Should these decisions be made by these residents or should they be made by the global community instead (if this were possible, say through the UN or a future world governing body) or should they not be made at all? You can vote on GO4 if you want to express your wishes on the desirability and structure of a world government [GO4 is not included in this sample of a ballot paper].

Q1 (national, attitude)

What size of population do you think we should aim for in Australia?

A1

Zero	0
<10 million	1
15 million	2
21.5 million (approximately the current size)	3
25 million	4
30 million	5
40 million	6

>40 million 7

We shouldn't aim for any particular size of population. We should be open to the ebb and flow of migration across the planet and to whatever birth rate we happen to have. 8

We should adhere to any population targets for Australia which may be determined by the world community, for example under the auspices of the United Nations. 9

Q2 (state, attitude)

For this question, just ignore the problems of changing or controlling the size of Tasmania's population - if we wanted to - and state the size you prefer it to be.

A2

Zero 10

<300,000 11

400,000 12

500,000 (approximately the current size) 13

600,000 14

800,000 15

1,000,000 16

2,000,000 17

>2,000,000 18

We shouldn't aim for any particular size of population within Tasmania but be open to ebb and flow of people over the whole nation. 19

Q3 (state, attitude)

If your answer to Q2 expresses a preference for restricting the size of Tasmania's population, either currently or after some further growth in the future, do you want Tasmania to secede from Australia if that is necessary to achieve this restriction (by making it possible for the state to implement its own population policy, including controlling migration into the state)?

A3

No, Tasmania should not secede.	20
Not sure.	21
Yes, Tasmania should secede if this is necessary.	22

PO2 ARE THE BENEFITS OF POPULATION GROWTH WORTH ITS COSTS?

Over the last decade, Australia's population grew at around 1.2% per year. This is the fastest of the developed countries, which average 0.3% per year and is the same as the current average for the world. In 2007, Australia's population grew at 1.6%, more than half of which (56%) was produced by net migration and the rest (44%) by natural increase (Weaver and Weaver 2008). A larger population gives benefits such as more people enjoying the Australian lifestyle, greater ethnic diversity, more cultural development and cultural facilities, bigger domestic markets and more intellectual and other human resources for our industrial development and our defence forces.

On the other hand this growth of population incurs economic costs. It requires expenditure on expansion of infrastructure such as housing, hospitals, schools, roads, factories, power stations, oil wells, mines and farms in order to maintain the national level of per capita affluence for more and more people. The cost, in terms of human effort or finance, of the population growth-driven part of our expansion of infrastructure and skills is not known, but may be more than 10% of Australia's GDP.

There is another type of cost incurred by this growth of population. As it progresses it makes natural resources more scarce. Natural resources are committed and consumed by the effort to support more Australians. At the same time there are more Australians sharing the remaining natural resources. So the per capita abundance of natural resources shrinks. This process also converts more and more free uses of natural resources, including the natural environment and biodiversity, into commercial uses. Some of the natural resources affected in these ways are

overseas, such as oil reserves and native forests of the tropics and North America. Australians are among the world's heaviest per capita consumers of natural resources, including an extreme per capita contribution to global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that is around ninth out of 185 countries in a ranking that includes emissions from changes in land use.

If the economic costs of the growth of our population were avoided by stopping such growth, the savings should permit more development in areas such as social welfare, future prospects for Aborigines, health, education, protection of biodiversity, protection of natural and cultural environments, increasing average income and leisure time, aid for other countries, converting energy sources from GHG emitting to renewable non-GHG types and contributing to the development of a global administration as described in GO4 [not included in this sample of a ballot paper].

Q1 (national; attitude and justification)

In view of the possible costs to both financial and natural resources, of increasing the size of Australia's population, do you think this population growth should be slowed or stopped to allow these resources to be used for other purposes?

A1 (attitude)

I think our population growth rate should be increased.	23
I think our population growth rate should be maintained.	24
Population growth in Australia should be slowed.	25
Population growth in Australia should be halted.	26

A1 (justification)

I think that population growth incurs financial costs.	27
I do not think that population growth incurs financial costs.	28
I think that population growth makes natural resources more scarce.	29
I do not think that population growth makes natural resources more scarce.	30

Since the early years of colonization Australians have enjoyed a lifestyle based on a high per capita availability of natural resources. This may be regarded as unfair when compared with the situation of people in more heavily populated countries. The word 'lifestyle' is used here to refer to affluence (or per capita income), plus quality of life. The latter comprises all those public goods that help to make life pleasant such as a healthy and interesting environment and a supportive and stimulating culture, including a high standard of social justice and social welfare.

Q1 (national; attitude)

Do you want Australia to maintain (or to achieve and then maintain) standards of per capita affluence and quality of life that may be distinctly higher than those in many other countries, because of an advantage for Australians of a relative per capita abundance of natural resources? Or do you think Australians should eliminate any such privilege in order to share our natural resources more equitably with other people around the world?

A1

Select one of the following four options:

- We should try to remain more affluent than the world average (also see Q3 below). 31
- We should try to remain more affluent than the world average - provided that this affluence is not produced by exploiting other nations (also see Q3 below). 32
- We should only be as affluent as the world average. 33
- We should be less affluent than the world average. 34

Select one of the following three options:

- We should try to retain a relatively high quality of life (also see Q3 a below). 35

We should have just an average quality of life.	36
We should have a quality of life below the world average.	37

Q2 (national; attitude)

Do you think that an important ingredient of both affluence and/or high quality of life is a low pressure of population on natural resources, in other words a high per capita abundance of land, sea, air and the natural resources (including native wildlife and vegetation) that go with them?

A2

Yes, for affluence.	38
Yes, for quality of life.	39
No, for affluence.	40
No, for quality of life.	41

Q3 (national; attitude)

Do you think that if we are to maintain living conditions that are better than those in many other countries, we will have to maintain immigration controls to restrict the inflow of immigrants wanting to enjoy these favourable conditions?

A3

We must restrict immigration to maintain relative affluence.	42
We must restrict immigration to maintain relative quality of life.	43
We do not have to restrict immigration to maintain relative affluence.	44
We do not have to restrict immigration to maintain relative quality of life.	45

PO4 WHO DO WE WANT TO JOIN US?

Q1 (national; attitude)

If Australia is to continue to accept immigrants, on what basis should they be selected?

A1

Select one or more of these answers

No selection criteria. First come, first accepted.	46
Acceptable races and ethnic groups only.	47
Their value to Australia's economy – accept the wealthy, those with skills in short supply, young, healthy, English language proficiency...	48
People seeking to avoid any economic, political or other difficulties.	49
Refugees from acute difficulties such as persecution, disaster or war.	50
Family reunion.	51
Minimize the numbers taken now, to maintain a maximum capacity for Australia to take refugees in the longer term, for example if global warming inundates places or causes famine by disrupting the Asian monsoon.	52

Perceptions of bias

Some citizens may interpret the People's Forum as being biased to a liberal viewpoint because it questions conservative positions much more than it questions liberal positions. This interpretation will arise to the extent that conservatism is a tendency to resist change, for the point of the Forum is to assist citizens to enquire about the status quo to see if change might improve prospects. So the questioning posture of the Forum will invite accusations of a bias against conservatives. But if we exclude questioning as an act of bias, it may be said that the People's Forum is not biased as it poses questions and offers answer options that invite all points of view to

be expressed and discussed. In describing an issue, however, the ballot paper may concentrate on evidence that calls for change in order to establish that there is, in fact a real issue and to demonstrate its possible significance. This may be needed to describe the risk involved in ignoring the issue. Risks or possibilities may be crucial parts of the description of an issue, but to someone who is averse to change their inclusion may look like bias. Public dispute may be expected to arise over such aspects of the Forum, but this should help stimulate citizens to deliberate issues and should be anticipated and welcomed by the managers of the Forum.

Such adverse reactions to the ballot paper will be guided by genetically influenced predispositions, so criticism of the People's Forum is likely to be persistent. Alford, Funk and Hibbing (2005) have shown that for the conservative-liberal spectrum of attitudes, genotype (or 'nature') accounts for approximately half the variance between individuals and environmental influences ('nurture') account for the rest. They suggest that renaming the 'conservative-liberal' polarity as 'absolutist-contextualist' would enable it to be recognized over a much wider range of human activity than politics. 'Contextualist' is a tendency to take a context-dependent rather than a rule-based approach to deciding what type of behaviour is appropriate. The description 'absolutist-contextualist' appears to match what Slovic calls the 'hierarchist-egalitarian' polarity of worldview (see Chapter 4/ Issue characteristics that create problems.../ 8. Externalizability), which he considers to be the most influential in human affairs. Slovic (cited in Bennett 2008, 5) observes that people "do their best to hold onto their worldviews", whether they are hierarchist or egalitarian (absolutist or contextualist), so it seems genetics explains much of this stubbornness. John Jost (cited in Giles 2008) has shown that people with high scores in the personality class of "openness" are almost twice as likely to be liberals than conservatives, that is, egalitarian (contextualist) rather than hierarchist (absolutist). Openness includes traits such as an ability to accept new ideas and new experiences, a tolerance for ambiguity, regarding change as opportunity rather than a problem and thinking about the world as it might be.

Although genotype is likely to produce some persistent resistance to People's Forums, the work of Shalom Schwartz and colleagues (cited in Jackson 2009, 162-3)

indicates that citizen's responses also depend on circumstances. As the introduction of a People's Forum could significantly change those circumstances it may also change the behaviour of citizens. Schwartz (2007) finds two major tensions between opposing values: a self-interest–altruism tension and a maintenance of tradition–openness to change tension. These polarities have been seen in samples from 67 countries and no evidence to the contrary has been found. The link identified by Jost, of “openness” with the egalitarian (contextualist) disposition indicates that the tradition-openness tension may largely be the hierarchist (absolutist)-egalitarian (contextualist) polarity. Schwartz provides an evolutionary explanation for the two major tensions that he identifies. As *Homo sapiens* evolved in social groups, individuals needed to attend to the interests of both self and group and the struggle for survival in a sometimes hostile environment required the abilities to adapt and to maintain stability. People are therefore able to strike different balances between self-interest and altruism and also between interest in change and tradition, according to their circumstances.

The important point here is that each society strikes the balance between altruism and selfishness (and also between novelty and tradition) in different places. And where this balance is struck depends crucially on social structure. When technologies, infrastructures, institutions and social norms reward self-enhancement and novelty, then selfish sensation-seeking behaviours prevail over more considered, altruistic ones. Where social structures favour altruism and tradition, self-transcending behaviours are rewarded and selfish behaviour may even be penalized (Jackson 200, 163).

The Forum will change social structure by adding to it an institution that facilitates discussion and thought about public affairs and this should shift the balance of tensions towards more altruism and openness to change. Although the introduction of the Forum may encounter opposition from conservatives, they are likely to feel obliged to engage with it in order to be seen to be willing to publicly defend their points of view and also to avoid creating a public image of not wanting to contribute, both to public discourse and to the monitoring of its progress.

CHAPTER 8

Supporting devices, performance indicators and trialling the People's Forum

The mission of the People's Forum is described in Chapter 6 as to improve the performance of any democracy by enhancing the quality of its public policy and also the legitimacy, or public acceptance, of this policy. These objectives are to be achieved by the Forum using two strategies: accelerating the development of public opinion and producing political influence for that part of this opinion which is likely to be the best developed. To implement these strategies, the People's Forum is designed to work with the activities of existing democratic institutions and activities such as the legislature and government, free media, the lobbying and campaigning of interest groups and the random sample polling of public opinion. I now consider whether, in doing these things that the Forum might be supported by democratic innovations that have been either proposed or used. The possibility of these devices being supported by the Forum is also considered.

A preliminary list is then presented, of ways of monitoring the effectiveness of the People's Forum as it operates. Some of these performance indicators would use democratic institutions and innovations such as opinion polling, democracy audits and the Deliberative Poll®. If, during the introductory phase of the operation of a Forum, performance indicators show it has some potential to achieve its mission, the public may be encouraged to have more confidence in it, which could help it work more effectively and increase the probability that it would become established as a political institution. Because of the possibility of such interactions, some devices listed here as having a potential to support the People's Forum also have potential as performance indicators.

Devices that may work with the People's Forum for mutual support

The two strategies of the People's Forum will tend to reinforce each other because much of whatever development of public opinion it achieves will be registered in its results, which means that these will tend to develop political influence - if and as, this sophistication becomes widely appreciated (as discussed in Chapter 7/ 'Function 5'). Any such political influence would help the Forum further develop mass public opinion. This would mainly occur among those voting in the Forum as many will discuss or debate its questions as part of their engagement, but the wider public will witness some of this activity and may learn from it and be encouraged to join in. This development of opinion will be driven by the Forum offering two types of incentive for citizens to argue and discuss issues with each other. One type is egoistic; the incentive of wanting to shape the Forum's voting trends, to give their political influence, whether potential or real, to one's views. The other type is solidary; a desire of citizens to assist the development of the opinion of their society as registered by the People's Forum, because this has or may develop political influence and thereby improve public policy.

The Forum's provision of egoistic and solidary incentives for public discourse will encourage citizens to form and assist groups that campaign on the issues it treats and also other groups that intensively deliberate these issues. Intensive deliberation groups may be composed of citizens randomly selected from the electorate, or self-selected by volunteering to participate, or randomly selected from volunteers. Examples of random selection deliberation groups are citizens' juries, planning cells, citizens' assemblies, Deliberative Polls and Online Deliberative Polls. Some of the self-selected groups are the 21st Century Town Meetings run by *AmericaSpeaks*, National Issues Forums and the Study Circles of Everyday Democracy. The third type of structure, random selection from volunteers, is employed by consensus conferences. As all these forums are designed for intensive deliberation their size is

usually limited to a tiny fraction of society, to allow personal intra-group communication. They may be considered to execute both of the polity-wide strategies of the People's Forum to some degree, however slight, and thereby to have potential to assist it and vice versa. For the first strategy – the facilitation of the development of mass public opinion – intensive deliberation forums will have little effect as they are primarily restricted to working on the opinions of their members. However their representativeness, especially that of strict random sample forums, gives them a potential to persuade non-participating citizens to support their verdicts because some non-participants may realize that these verdicts are likely to be what they would think, if they had the opportunity to deliberate effectively (Fishkin 1997, 162; Brown 2006, 211). Such confidence by citizens in a representative process has been well developed for law court juries and has also been demonstrated for the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform: "the CA process itself acquired a trustworthy reputation and this gave reason for voters to support its recommendation" (Ferejohn 2008, 202). Whenever such public trust is achieved by a deliberative forum it should gain political influence and thus begin to execute the second strategy of the People's Forum.

If intensive deliberation forums operate in a society that has a People's Forum and consider issues that the Forum treats, they are likely to produce conclusions consistent with the Forum's voting trend on those issues and which forecast with some reliability, what the ultimate conclusion of the People's Forum would be, after it had run those questions for many years. Because intensive deliberation forums are likely to have such predictive capacity, their managers might call on all citizens to support their results, by voting in alignment with these in the Forum's polls and by calling on politicians to implement the policies being indicated by the Forum's polling trends. Many commentators on public affairs might endorse such calls. In this manner, the People's Forum and intensive deliberation forums should draw attention to each other, making both more effective in facilitating the development of public opinion and also in developing political influence for the relatively developed opinion that they express. This symbiosis may produce a synergy in which the combined effect is greater than that of adding the effects of the People's Forum

operating on its own in a society, to the effects the intensive deliberation forums would deliver if they were run there without the People's Forum.

The most promising types of intensive deliberation panels for synergism with the People's Forum are now briefly described.

Citizens' juries

The citizens' jury comprises a small number of citizens (12 - 24) who are selected by stratified random sampling and paid a small honorarium by a sponsoring body such as a public authority. It is run by an independent organisation that provides a facilitator. It hears evidence, questions witnesses, deliberates over 3-4 days and produces a report that the sponsoring authority is expected to respond to. Citizens' juries have been run in the United States by the Jefferson Centre and in the UK by several organizations, including the Institute for Public Policy Research.

Vivien Lowndes, Lawrence Pratchett and Gerry Stoker (2001, 448) report that "not only are people prepared to join 'juries', but the public at large is willing to trust their decision-making - even over that of elected representatives."

Planning cells

Planning cells are the German equivalent of citizens' juries, being randomly selected groups of around twenty-five citizens who advise government authorities. They are rather more formal in the way information is provided and also in their organization, as they rotate participants between small cells of five to make sure they all interact (Smith 2005).

Consensus conferences

These are small deliberating groups similar to citizens' juries, but their members are largely self-selected, being chosen by socio-demographic criteria from a pool of volunteers who have responded to advertisements with written applications. They have been run by the Danish Board of Technology since the 1980s. Each conference is preceded by a series of pre-conference meetings where the members learn about the issue and frame questions. The panel's recommendations have no binding authority

on government, but have sometimes had a direct impact on the legislative process (Smith 2005).

The Deliberative Poll®

This system was devised by James Fishkin and uses a random sample of 250-500 citizens, which is large enough to make stratification unnecessary. The group begins its work with each member completing an opinion poll on the issue to be deliberated and then 2-3 days are spent hearing evidence from specialists and deliberating in small groups. The work is concluded with a repetition of the same opinion poll of the members, which is compared with the pre-deliberation poll. These comparisons give clear evidence of participants changing their views during the process, having reflected on evidence presented and the views of other participants (Smith 2005).

The Deliberative Poll® has also been conducted online. In this format deliberation is by a random sample of around 500 citizens and runs for 2 hours per week for 4 weeks. The development of opinion achieved by this version appears to be less pronounced than with face-to-face deliberative polling (Smith 2005).

Deliberation Day

Deliberation Day was devised in 1999 by James Fishkin and Bruce Ackerman to try to expand the sample of the Deliberative Poll, potentially to the whole electorate. This would be a one day public holiday held ten days before major national elections to enable registered voters to deliberate pivotal issues in small groups of 15 that come together during that day, in plenary sessions of 500. Attendees would be paid US\$150 for their day's work of citizenship. This idea has been widely discussed but Philippe Schmitter (cited in POWERInquiry 2004, 6) sees a need for "much broader kinds of mechanisms of deliberation." Nine years previously, Adolf Gundersen noted that

whereas Fishkin stresses representative, group processes, or deliberative forums, I stress universal, undifferentiated ones. (The difference here is really one of emphasis: the two kinds of process are not mutually exclusive. It is just that the latter kind has been too often overlooked) (Gundersen 1995, 247, brackets in original).

AmericaSpeaks 21st Century Town Meetings

These meetings are conducted for one day with between 500 to 5,000 citizens who are self-selected, as they have volunteered in response to advertisements. Some outreach may be used to ensure a reasonable level of participation from disengaged citizens. The meeting employs small group dialogue involving 10-12 demographically diverse citizens and an independent facilitator. These groups are connected by computer, voting keypads and large closed-circuit television screens. Experts present balanced information and give advice as needed. A clear link to decision-makers such as public authorities is established at the outset and their representatives attend the proceedings, but the results are not binding on these authorities (Smith 2005).

World Wide Views

This system has been devised by the Danish Board of Technology and its partners, in order to extend representative deliberation across the planet. It includes design elements from the Deliberative Poll®, *AmericaSpeaks*' and the Consensus Conference. In each country, citizens are selected as randomly as is feasible and then given an invitation to join a WWV group. From those who accept, a group of 100 is chosen on the basis of representing the demography of their country in age, gender, occupation, education and other respects. Some countries may have several groups meeting on different sites and all groups from around the world pool their findings via a web tool. The initial application was for a World Wide Views on Global Warming, delivering its findings two and a half months before the December 2009 UN Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen (WWV 2009; WWV 2010).

National Issues Forums and Study Circles

These are locally sponsored variable-sized public forums of self-selected participants. National Issues Forums are coordinated across the US by the Kettering Foundation. Every year its NIF Institute focuses on several major issues by publishing issue books, each of which describes three or four approaches to one

issue (never just two polar opposites) as a framework for deliberations. Discussions are led by trained moderators. The Foundation regularly collates the findings of the forums and its reports are published and presented to elected officials to give them an insight into the considered views of concerned members of the public. Study circles are similar to National Issues Forums and are organized by the Paul J. Aicher Foundation's Everyday Democracy at East Hartford CT (Smith 2005).

Televote

This name has been applied to two types of forum which culminate in a vote by telephone. One type uses self-selected participants and the other a random sample. Participants are presented with questions, information, pro and con arguments and invited to deliberate on these by themselves and with friends or acquaintances for a few weeks before voting. The self-selecting version was invented in the 1970s by Vincent Campbell in California, who used newspaper advertisements to invite people to take part. In 1978, Ted Becker and Christa Daryl Slaton altered it by using random selection to have a representative sample of the public deliberate and vote on the Hawaii State Constitutional Convention. Their system has been subsequently used on eleven other occasions in Hawaii, New Zealand and California (Slaton 2001).

E-Democracy

E-Democracy started as the Minnesota Politics and Issues Forum in 1994, running internet-based forums for discussing state, national and global political issues. More than fifty of these forums now operate across the US, UK and New Zealand. Participation is self-selected and a manager lightly moderates the discussion in each forum, ensuring that users follow the rules of engagement. On occasions the press has covered the online debates of the Minnesota Politics and Issues Forum, which indicates it may have an agenda-setting influence. Participants have reported that their involvement increases their political interest and knowledge as well as their understanding and respect for the views of other citizens (Smith 2005).

Civic Commons in Cyberspace

The Civic Commons in Cyberspace (CCC) was proposed by the UK Institute for Public Policy Research in order to extend the Minnesota E-Democracy model from a forum facilitating the development of public opinion, to one that empowers this opinion and develops it more comprehensively. CCC was designed by Jay Blumler and Stephen Coleman, who specify that it be run by a new publicly funded agency and should promote, facilitate and summarize online deliberations, with authorities expected to react formally to whatever emerges from these public discussions. CCC would create a central access point for citizens to deliberate on public issues at all levels of government and would provide a one-stop shop for politicians to find out about these discussions. It “would have a particular interest in exploring new ways of consulting intelligently with the broadest possible range of citizens” (Blumler and Coleman 2001, 16). It may therefore see needs to coordinate citizens’ deliberations by staging public events such as polls, so that all who are interested know when to engage and can do so in a way that produces a collective choice for a polity. In other words, a CCC could have a strong interest in the People’s Forum. CCC has a more complex function than the Forum as it would engage in “promoting, publicising, regulating, moderating, summarizing, and evaluating the broadest and most inclusive range of online deliberation” (Blumler and Coleman 2001, 17). The Forum would not have to continually work at regulating, moderating and evaluating deliberations. Evaluation would be done by the annual voting by citizens and the regulation and moderation of deliberations would be restricted to the setting of guidelines by the way the Forum’s ballot paper is written. These guidelines would comprise the selection of issues, the descriptions of issues, the selection of questions and the indications given to voters of relationships between issues. The only regulation by the Forum of deliberation as it takes place would be alteration of the ballot paper in response to public criticisms and updating the range of issues it presents.

A CCC could not function without the active support of a government willing to relinquish control of the rules and agenda to an independent body. Public

authorities must also be willing to formally respond to the results of citizens' deliberations. The "digital divide" should not be a problem as the internet makes

it easier for individuals to find and follow what concerns them personally, and by lowering the costs of obtaining information, the influence of social status on political involvement may be reduced. Citizens and groups with few resources can undertake acts of communication and monitoring that previously were the domain mainly of resource-rich organisations and individuals (Blumler and Coleman 2001, 13).

Citizens' Assemblies

The Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform for British Columbia was a representative deliberative forum that ran from January to December in 2004. It was established by the government of BC with a commitment that it would hold a referendum on its findings. The Assembly comprised 160 randomly selected citizens with an independent chairman and studied the options for electoral reform in BC. It reviewed evidence given at 50 public hearings, received 1603 written submissions and deliberated before determining its recommendations by voting. Assembly members were assisted by holding meetings at weekends, with childcare and payment for their work.

This process differs from other deliberative forums in that it was on-going for a considerable time and had an official undertaking that its recommendations would be acted on. As this was to put them to a referendum the wisdom acquired by the members of the assembly was partially discarded by having the relatively disengaged and uninformed general public make the final choice. Although the final vote within the Assembly was near unanimous at 146 to 7, the referendum result was 57.7% in favour of the Assembly's verdict, far higher than the same proposal would have secured if it had come from the legislature (Goodin 2008, 269). The public exposure of the Assembly's deliberations and its statistical representation of all citizens may have educated some of them about the issue and, as noted above, encouraged them to have some confidence in the Assembly's work and use its findings as a heuristic for their vote in the referendum. However these effects were

not enough for the Assembly's extremely strong choice of an STV electoral system to be approved by the statutory 60% majority of public votes.

Ontario followed BC with its own Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform, which started in September 2006 and finished in May 2007 with a recommendation of 94 members for, and 8 against, mixed member proportional representation. The final result was less impressive than that in BC, for when the Ontario choice was put to a public referendum in October 2007 it was rejected by 63 per cent of voters. A forum patterned on the citizens' assembly called the Citizens' Parliament (newDemocracy Foundation 2008) was run in Australia from October 2008 to February 2009 on "How can Australia's political system be strengthened to serve us better?" This event did not have government sponsorship so its conclusions were not put to a referendum.

Conclusions on mutual support by the People's Forum and intensive deliberation forums

The use of the internet by E-Democracy and Civic Commons in Cyberspace gives them a potentially unlimited reach across both the number of participants and the number of issues being treated that resembles the potential of the People's Forum. However, the undertakings of both organisations to actively manage discussions makes it difficult for them to handle many issues simultaneously, a problem that the People's Forum would avoid by facilitating deliberation without monitoring or controlling the give and take of public debate, as discussed in Chapter 7/ 'Function 1'. CCC could be effective at establishing and assisting the People's Forum because it is intended to have an "interest in exploring new ways of consulting intelligently with the broadest possible range of citizens" (Blumler and Coleman 2001, 16). However, a major problem with CCC is that of raising the political will to get it launched and run. It was proposed early in 2001 but no government has tried it out and there seems little chance of private funds being able to initiate it because it relies on a commitment by government to heed the public deliberations it reports. A way of overcoming this problem may be to use private funds to initiate the People's

Forum first. If money could be found to run a demonstration trial of the Forum in some jurisdiction and if this successfully established it as a political institution in that situation, then the argument for establishing CCC might be easier to promote, for it could be proposed as a mother department that funds the continuing operation of the People's Forum, as well as other functions. These functions include promoting, facilitating and summarizing intensive deliberation forums such as deliberative polls, consensus conferences and on-line groups, so CCC could help these to synergise the work of the People's Forum, as discussed. Intensive deliberation forums could also complement the work of the People's Forum by indicating how the general public would react, if it was able to carefully deliberate, to issues that are too short-term for treatment by the Forum.

If an issue on the People's Forum ballot paper is especially urgent then those who are very concerned about it may decide to accelerate the Forum process by funding a random sample intensive deliberation forum to demonstrate what the future development of public opinion is likely to be on this issue, if it became better known throughout the community. This demonstration might cultivate public confidence most effectively if it was performed by a Citizens' Assembly, in order to extend it over time and take submissions from the public.

Two other innovations that might be considered for operation in conjunction with the People's Forum are pyramidal democracy and the People's House, as described in Chapter 6. Pyramidal democracy would pursue the Forum's mission of improving the quality and legitimacy of public policy by inviting citizens to have confidence in the deliberations of chains of representatives that invite specific inputs from all citizens. It would do this by employing both strategies used by the People's Forum. The first strategy, development of mass public opinion, would be attempted by offering political participation to all citizens in the small intensive deliberation groups at the base of the pyramid. The second strategy of giving political influence to the most developed part of mass public opinion is executed by the pyramid giving this power most directly to the small group of delegates at its apex. The complexity of transmission of this influence from all citizens to the few at the top may mean that citizens have less incentive to get involved with the first tier of councils than they

have to engage with the People's Forum. As the People's Forum and pyramidal democracy are similar in mission and strategies they might be viewed as alternatives to each other rather than as complementary. However the ability of the Forum to treat an unlimited number of issues simultaneously means that it should be able to assist pyramidal democracy.

As noted in Chapter 6, the mission of the People's House is to give a voice to the public, curb special interests, counter legislative gridlock and aggregate electors' preferences more equitably. This bears some similarity to the mission of the People's Forum of improving the quality and legitimacy of public policy, but the strategy of the House is rather different. Instead of encouraging the development of the opinion of the general public and then assisting citizens to gain confidence in the section of their opinion that is most likely to be best developed, the People's House would help a random sample of the public to develop its opinions and ask all citizens to have confidence in these. Such confidence would depend mainly on public awareness of three features: that the sample is very representative; that it deliberates carefully; and perhaps that it is large enough to give most citizens some prospect of being able to have meaningful contact with at least one of its members.

The strategies of the People's Forum and the People's House it might be compared by viewing the Forum as aiming mostly at improving the quantity and quality of participation while the House aims mostly at improving the quality of representation. These two institutions could therefore complement each other. If they were both operating in a polity, the Forum's strategies should assist politicians to endorse the well developed policies of the House by assisting them to be better understood and accepted by citizens. At the same time, the House would help the Forum by advocating, within the legislature, specific parts of the broad spectrum of policy that the Forum would be slowly developing over successive polls.

Performance indicators for the Peoples' Forum

If the Peoples' Forum is tried out, it will be useful to check how well it works. The direct way to do this is to assess the Forum's achievement of its mission and the indirect way is to assess the implementation of its strategies. Performance indicators may therefore be any means of assessing the following four aspects.

Achievement of the mission of the People's Forum:

- i. improving the quality of public policy;
- ii. improving the legitimacy of public policy;

Execution of the strategies of the People's Forum:

- iii. accelerating the development of mass public opinion, and;
- iv. producing political influence for that part of public opinion that is relatively well developed.

Assessing the achievement of mission should be a more reliable way of indicating performance than assessing execution of strategies. It is, of course, very difficult to reliably assess changes in these four parameters. Possible ways of doing this are now suggested.

Indicators of achievement of mission (indicator classes i & ii)

The following four types of assessment might indicate how well an operating People's Forum appears to improve the quality and legitimacy of public policy.

1 *Democracy indices.* A few broad changes might be monitored in the quality and legitimacy of the public policy of a democracy after it has commenced using a People's Forum by observing trends in its democracy index as assessed by organisations such as the US-based Freedom House, Democratic Audit in the UK and *The Economist* Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy. The latter monitors five categories of democratic function for each country: electoral process and pluralism;

functioning of government; political participation; democratic political culture; and civil liberties. Each of these categories is analysed into several sub-categories (anywhere from eight to fourteen) and for each sub-category the country's performance is given a rating. Some of these sub-categories concern the legitimacy of public policy, for example "Public confidence in government" and "Public confidence in political parties" (in the category "Functioning of government"). It may be possible to use some of these democracy index components by comparing the rates of change they show in categories or sub-categories before the introduction of the People's Forum, against those attained after its introduction.

2 *Polls of public opinion.* Some of the assessments of sub-categories for democracy indices are derived from mass public opinion polling within the polity being assessed. Polling of this type might be done in a more detailed manner than that currently employed by democracy index researchers to ascertain citizens' perceptions of the quality and legitimacy of government policies on specific issues, both before and after a People's Forum is introduced.

3 *Polls of expert opinion.* Surveys asking questions similar to those for indicator 2 may be posed, not to the general public, but to experts in public policy, such as academics and executives of interest groups to give another indicator of the quality, but not legitimacy, of policy.

4 *Intensive deliberation forums.* Intensive deliberation forums that are either self-selected or random samples could assess the effect of the People's Forum on the quality of public policy. The findings of the random sample types would also indicate the potential for the legitimacy of the public policies being developed by a People's Forum. This would be a potential that might be realized after extensive and protracted public debate on those issues.

Indicators of performance in executing the first strategy (indicator type iii)

Indications of changes in or acceleration of, the development of mass public opinion by an operating People's Forum should be given by the following devices.

5 *Polls of public opinion.* Records of mass public opinion polling before and after the advent of a People's Forum on specific questions that it covers. These may show whether the Forum appeared to change the rate of change of this opinion on these questions.

6 *Polls of expert opinion.* The results of polls of specialists in mass public opinion on particular issues (such as political scientists and the executives of interest groups) on their perceptions of the effect of a People's Forum on the development of mass public opinion on questions that it has run and in which they have expertise. This performance indicator is similar to that of indicator 3 but it focuses on the development of mass public opinion under the People's Forum instead of its effect on the quality of public policy.

Indicators of performance in executing the second strategy (indicator type iv)

The following indicators should show the extent to which an operating People's Forum is generating political influence for relatively well developed public opinion, as registered by People's Forum polls.

7 *Forum turnout.* The percentage of electors that vote in a People's Forum. A percentage close to zero would indicate negligible influence, but only a small percentage, say 5%, in combination with good ratings for indicator 8 below, may indicate considerable influence for the opinion expressed in People's Forum poll results. The figure of 5% is suggested as should be a large part of the section of the community that is knowledgeable about political issues, as discussed in Chapter 2/ Ambiguous delegation/ 'Ignorant directors'.

8 *Polls of public opinion.* Mass public opinion poll ratings of approval and disapproval of:

8.1 the People's Forum system,

8.2 People's Forum poll results and their trends.

These polls should be conducted on a regular basis, say at least annually, to register any trends in approval or disapproval.

A small scale trial for the People's Forum?

It would be very helpful if the effectiveness of the People's Forum could be assessed by trying it out at a small scale that costs much less than the several million dollars anticipated for the operational scale, state or national trials recommended in Chapter 6/ 'Initiating and running the Forum'. Any such small scale experiment must indicate whether the People's Forum is likely to achieve its mission at the scale of operation for which it is designed, or - as a less conclusive substitute - whether it will execute its two strategies at this large scale. As the mission is to improve the quality and legitimacy of public policy in a state, or national or multi-national jurisdiction it seems unlikely that a small scale trial of the Forum could reliably indicate whether it would do this - but could such a trial test the likelihood of it being able to execute its strategies?

For the Forum's first strategy – accelerating the development of mass public opinion across a large jurisdiction – such a trial might use three randomly selected groups of the same size to represent the behaviour of the members of a large jurisdiction. Two of these groups would be selected at the beginning of a period of perhaps five years, during which one of them would be exposed to the Forum's distinctive 'deliberative' technique, which is based on offering group members an annual vote on a Forum ballot paper. The other group would be offered one vote at the beginning of this period on the same ballot paper and would then have no further input into the trial. At the end of the trial period, a third group of the same size would be randomly selected from those members of the large jurisdiction who

have not previously voted on that ballot paper and they would be offered one vote on it, with no opportunity to deliberate before voting. This vote would be compared with the final and contemporaneous vote of the sample group that had been participating in the annual vote over the five year period, to see if there is a significant difference between them. Any such difference should arise from the deliberative influence of the Forum's process on the members of the sample that was exposed to the opportunity to vote over the five year period. The vote of the sample group that only voted once, at the beginning of the period, would be compared with the vote of the group that only voted once, at the end of the period, to indicate the changes in opinion that occurred over the large jurisdiction without any influence from the Forum.

However this comparison cannot test the Forum's effectiveness because only part of its deliberative technique can be applied to a small group. This part comprises three main components: the way the ballot paper is written together with its very large menu of issues for potential voters to choose from; a regular and spaced vote such as an annual poll, which provides publicized periods for deliberation, feedback on attitudes and then redeliberation; and voluntary voting, which helps to promote communication about issues as citizens urge each other to vote. The part of the Forum's deliberative technique that cannot be applied to a small group is a large part of it. This part of the technique is to offer to the members of a group the possibility or probability that their voting will have political influence. Awareness of this will motivate some members to try to use this influence by publicly arguing about the issues presented by the poll, in the course of which some may think and learn more than they otherwise would have done. Awareness of a possibility of political influence cannot arise in the members of a group that is too small to have such influence. This discouragement would be strengthened by the types of issues that the Forum would deal with. As these issues are persistent, long term problems, many of which are interrelated and of fundamental importance, they can only be influenced by large jurisdictions. It is therefore only members of large groups that can imagine that they might influence this type of policy and could thereby be motivated in this way by Forum polls to deliberate. The factors that may encourage members of large

groups to imagine they could influence policy are discussed in Chapter 7/ Elements of the design.../ 'Function 5...'. As members of small groups will not be as motivated by a Forum poll to think about issues as members of very large groups are likely to be, a trial of the Forum in a small group is likely to underestimate the Forum's potential to execute its first strategy of accelerating the development of public opinion.

To run a small scale test of the effectiveness of the People's Forum in executing its second strategy, that of producing political influence for the part of public opinion that is likely to be relatively well developed, one randomly selected experimental group appears necessary. If this sample accurately represents the many members of a large jurisdiction, it might be expected to simulate their behaviour. Such simulation requires the People's Forum to be run for this sample group over several years, with a sequence of polls at regular intervals of a year or at least several months. As the vote is voluntary, only those in this sample who are interested in any of the many issues on the ballot paper would be expected to vote, as is envisaged for an operational scale Forum. The results of these trial polls would therefore be taken as representing the views of those in that sample group with relatively well developed views on the issues presented. However the members of this group may all feel obliged or stimulated by the attention given to them (in being randomly selected and personally advised of the availability of a ballot paper) to take an interest in the issues presented in this ballot and also to vote in it, regardless of whether they really are interested in those issues. This could mean that almost all the members of the sample vote in the polls it is offered, so there is little difference between the opinions of the whole sample and that large majority of it that chooses to vote. If this happens then there can be virtually no granting of political influence by all the members of the sample to a small subset of it who vote, for this is virtually a case of the members granting themselves this influence. Also, as discussed above, this political influence will not even exist for a small group, so such a sample will have nothing to say about whether it grants it to its voting members or not. A sample group will therefore not execute the second strategy of the Forum, not because the Forum cannot do this but

because the group in which it operates in this experimental trial has far too few members for them to be able to.

Small scale trials are therefore very likely to underestimate the potential for the People's Forum to execute both of its strategies in large jurisdictions. Even if such trials were not misleading in this way, they would still be somewhat deficient because they do not assess the Forum's capacity to achieve its mission.

CHAPTER 9

Discussion and conclusions

As discussed in Part 1, the propensity for democratic dysfunction to cause crucial issues to be neglected or mismanaged by existing liberal democratic systems of government indicates that correction of this dysfunction is an important and urgent problem. Four areas of public policy failure that impact on the management of limited natural capital were described in Chapters 4 and 5 to illustrate this: overpopulation, global warming, unemployment and growth of wants. There are many other important areas concerning public goods where democratic public policy may show similar cause of failure, such as in foreign affairs, in the economic management that produced the recent global financial crisis and in debilitating inequalities within and between nations, but the four cases investigated here indicate that governments must be extremely capable in recognizing and executing their responsibilities. Unfortunately, the three sources of dysfunction analysed in Part 1 are liable to impair the ability of governments to execute their responsibility for sound intergenerational management of public goods.

Part 2 proposed the creation of a new political institution, the People's Forum, to correct some of this irresponsibility. A theoretical comparative analysis of this design with three others of similar purpose in Chapter 6 concluded that it has considerable merit. As this design is based on theoretical predictions of dysfunction from generic elements of the structure of liberal democratic governments, it is interesting to give it a more practical assessment by briefly checking whether it appears able to address general difficulties that are currently being experienced by these governments.

Ralf Dahrendorf (2000) has drawn on his experience as a social scientist, as a founder of the European Community and as a member of the UK House of Lords to

identify five major problems for contemporary democracies. The first is that democracy works best when the people are strongly involved, which is usually when democracy is being fought for. Once it is well established and citizens' rights are generalized, conflicts become less urgent, more diffuse and the people tend to disengage. The People's Forum may be able to counter this diffusion with its careful definition of issues and questions and its persistence with these for an extended time, so that citizens are assisted to maintain their focus and develop considered judgments.

Dahrendorf's second difficulty is that political democracy is linked to nation-states and as their significance is eroded by globalization, government seems less relevant. As the Forum should be able to work across international domains it may be able to counter this decline, partly by developing an international form of democratic governance and also by strengthening the sense of purpose and responsibility in each democracy.

The third concern is a slide towards authoritarianism as national governments try to bypass parliaments by consolidating the power of executive systems, which in the US is led by the growing power of the presidency. Dahrendorf (2000, 312) describes this as

a curious development that has to do with the complexities of government, the need for expertise, and the as yet undefined role of the media... these trends need to be deplored or reversed, but no new mechanisms have been found to control ostensibly independent bodies, rein in quangos, and channel vague expressions of public opinion.

The People's Forum may provide such a mechanism as it should restore the role of 'parliament' in the sense of creating one for the people. This should also help to clarify "vague expressions of public opinion."

Dahrendorf's (2000, 313) fourth difficulty is the flip side of creeping authoritarianism: the apathy of many citizens who are "tired of what they regard as the democratic game". Such disengagement at the bottom strengthens authority at the top, but it should be countered by the People's Forum offering citizens easy but

meaningful ways to participate, such as voting once a year on strategic issues and engaging as they feel inclined in public discourse on the Forum's questions.

Dahrendorf's final democratic difficulty is that civil society has become less cohesive in ways that erode the social base of government. This is partly due to democracy overcoming class-based party struggles to produce generalized citizenship rights. As these are individual rights they tend to atomize collective identity and this challenges us to ensure that tomorrow's society will have the cohesion to function. Here again, the People's Forum appears to give an answer. By providing an arena in which citizens can communicate with each other, it may be able to bring them together to select their agenda and to work through it by discussing and regularly voting on what they want to contribute to the common good.

Conclusions

This study offers four contributions to political science and one to ecological economics. One contribution to political science is the 'triple dysfunction' hypothesis about why representative liberal democratic governments presently fail to some degree. While the literature provides other explanations of democratic failure, the triple dysfunction hypothesis is notable for its systemic reach, simplicity and its novel suggestion that much failure is caused by ambiguity in delegation of authority and responsibility. This ambiguity presently appears to be neglected in political science, perhaps because other effects of electoral systems are influential in more noticeable ways, such as the electoral risk the representative runs when choosing her mix of acting as a delegate or trustee, while attempting to communicate with electors (Young 2000). Another of these effects is the risk to the citizen of poor accountability when she delegates with insufficient information about representatives' intentions and performance (Lupia and McCubbins 1998). Ambiguity in delegation leaves democracies vulnerable to neglect and corruption, on issues that demand a finely

developed sense of responsibility such as those that concern the long term or relationships with external groups.

The second contribution to political science is an institutional design, the People's Forum, which should be capable of being implemented within existing dysfunctional democratic polities and, over time, of remedying the causes of this dysfunction. This design would correct ambiguity of delegation, not by issuing explicit instructions to citizens and representatives - in the manner of duty statements or position descriptions - but by providing on-going incentives for citizens and representatives to perform different roles. It would also build their respective capacities to perform effectively in these roles.

The third contribution of this project to political science is the modification of Graham Smith's (2009) framework for comparing the capabilities of democratic institutions to produce a framework for comparing the capabilities of new designs of democratic government. These designs may be constructed in several ways: as an existing design of government with one or more new institutions added to it; an existing form with one or more institutions eliminated from it; a combination of these; or a fundamentally new form, such as pyramidal democracy or some form of sortition. Graham Smith's framework has thus been adapted for holistic or systemic comparisons of how effective different institutions might be in contributing to the performance of democratic government. The theoretical comparison that was made with this framework gives some support to the triple dysfunction hypothesis as it indicates that the design developed in the present theoretical study to correct this dysfunction - the People's Forum - is the most likely of the four designs compared, to function effectively. A substantial empirical test of the triple dysfunction requires the Forum to be implemented in a sub-national or national polity, with large-scale involvement over a time period of at least five years. Such a trial is clearly a costly enterprise in the context of academic research and well outside the scope of the present study. It is nonetheless eminently feasible in the context of existing public and private resources dedicated to enhancing public participation in democratic government and in relation to the benefits that may flow from better democratic

management of public goods, such as natural capital. The performance indicators suggested in Chapter 8 may help to assess such a trial.

The fourth contribution to political science offered by the present study is that the development of the People's Forum is formalized as a widely applicable and novel method for the design of political institutions. This method is a contribution towards correcting a "paucity of literature specifically on design issues in the study of social institutions" (Goodin 1996, 31). The theoretical comparative testing of the People's Forum presented in this thesis suggests that this method is robust. Further theoretical and empirical testing of the method is planned in future phases of this research and is welcomed from others. Such tests should also indicate whether the strategies of the method have potential to counter the tendency in political theory for specialization to obscure the significance or relevance of theoretical information.

The contribution made here to ecological economics is the argument pursued in Chapter 5 that liberal democratic governments have a long term tendency to destroy their citizens' quality of life through systematically poor management of natural capital, or size of population, or both. The triple dysfunction of existing liberal democratic government does this by neglecting the public good of the per capita availability of natural capital, so this availability is progressively destroyed. This neglect produces a bias in government policy to macro-allocate public natural capital from the ecological system to the economic subsystem. In this subsystem it is private natural capital and some of it is then micro-allocated to private investment and consumption. In this way, macro and micro-allocation continually diminish the availability of natural capital, partly by reducing its quantity and partly by inflating wants for its use. Sooner or later, this decline in availability becomes a chronic erosion of citizens' quality of life and ecological viability.

This argument for integrating the concerns of ecological economics into the study of democratic institutions develops four conceptual claims in addition to that of triple dysfunction. The first of these claims is that provisions of public and private goods continually compete with each other, so under provision of public goods may be considered an over provision of private goods. This means that the triple dysfunction hypothesis that democracies have a structural tendency to under-

provide public goods is also a hypothesis that they have a bias to over provide private goods. The second claim is that one form of this private goods bias is a bias by democratic government to supply the wants of citizens, rather than to manage these wants in the context of the provision of public goods. The third claim is that this supplying of personal wants inflates them, through adaptation and status rivalry, both of which are encouraged by sales promotion. This inflation of wants by supplying them leads to the fourth claim that it feeds back to continue the inflation because inflating wants stimulates greater efforts to increase supplies.

The limitation of this study is that its contributions to political science and ecological economics are theoretical. Although the argument of the thesis has been developed in the light of secondary empirical data in the literature, the hypothesis of democratic dysfunction and the proposed institutional remedy have been tested by theoretical means only. However, it is contended that theory is a necessary basis for empirical experiment and this work sets up a novel and promising platform for future empirical research. The comparison of four innovative forms of democratic government undertaken in this study indicates that the People's Forum warrants an operational trial. This judgment could be checked by reviewing the capability assessments entered into the evaluation framework that produced this conclusion and also by reviewing the validity of the framework itself. Effort might also be put into devising more promising institutional designs and the method proposed here could be used for this purpose.

If the People's Forum is to be tested, this would require running it for several years in either a province or a nation. The trial could be made more conclusive by concurrently running other democratic innovations to see if this produced synergistic/mutually supportive interaction. Intensive deliberation forums may be the most effective of such innovations and to consider which to use, and in which combinations, they could be separated into two classes: self-selected or open intensive forums such as National Issues Forums, Study Circles, *AmericaSpeaks* and Minnesota E-Democracy and random sample or closed intensive forums such as deliberative opinion polls, online deliberative polling, consensus conferences, planning cells and citizens' assemblies. Self-selected intensive forums could make

some contribution by assisting in very limited ways to develop mass public opinion on questions posed by the People's Forum's ballot paper. Randomly selected intensive forums might contribute more widely by giving some political influence to Forum polls through publishing findings on Forum questions that show what the mass public would think if it had the opportunity to deliberate fully. In addition, self-selection and random sample intensive forums may provide performance indicators that monitor the effectiveness of a Forum as it operates. If these indicators show good (poor) performance their publication may help (hinder) the performance of the Forum. Self-selection and random sample panels may indicate whether the Forum's mission of improving public policy is being achieved and random sample panels may indicate whether the mission of legitimacy for this policy is being accomplished

The urgent need for competent democratic government has been stressed by eminent American environmental scientist, James Speth (cited in Else 2008, 48).

My conclusion is that we're trying to do environmental policy and activism within a system that is simply too powerful. It's today's capitalism, with its overwhelming commitment to growth at all costs, its devolution of tremendous power into the corporate sector, and its blind faith in a market riddled with externalities... The only solution is to... figure out what needs to be done to change today's capitalism... We need a new political movement in the US to drive this... The economy we have now is an inherently rapacious and ruthless system. It is up to citizens to inject values that reflect human aspirations rather than just making money... But groups, whether they're concerned about social issues, social justice, the environment, or effective politics, are failing because they're not working together.

The People's Forum is put forward as a possible basis for a "new political movement" that helps "citizens to inject values that reflect human aspirations" so that government has the vision and strength to "change today's capitalism". The Forum's design invites all citizens to think about and contribute to public policy. It appreciates that any of them may have talents, interests, knowledge, sensitivities and sense of civic responsibility that could be useful in this enterprise. Its open and

careful approach may inspire citizens with hope as it helps them work together towards a safer and more fulfilling future.

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